WOMEN
IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

A STATISTICAL REPORT

April, 1990

Prepared for Ministry of Government Management Services
and Minister Responsible for Women's Programs by:

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PREFACE

Women in British Columbia: A Statistical Report was researched and written by Policynet Communications Ltd. under contract for the Ministry of Government Management Services and Minister Responsible for Women's Programs.

The report provides a statistical overview of the status of British Columbia women in seven areas of life. These are: the role of women in a changing B.C. population; women and the family; educational advancements and challenges facing women; the experience of women in the labour force; women, earnings and income; the situation of women respecting housing; and finally, the health of women in British Columbia.

The report does not represent an exhaustive study into the above subject areas, nor into the status of all women in British Columbia. For example, the report does not examine the issues of violence against women, the political standing of women in the province, women in the criminal justice system, or specific sub-groups of females such as immigrant women, native women or women with disabilities. These are important areas of analysis but were outside the scope of this report.

Throughout the study, the authors focused their efforts on pinpointing general patterns of change and consistency in the seven areas of female life. Wherever possible, data for British Columbia women were used. However, Canadian data were periodically relied upon when provincial data were unavailable. The authors also used statistics on men in British Columbia and women in other provinces, against which the positions of women in British Columbia were compared.

The authors would like to thank the numerous individuals in the B.C. Government who contributed statistics for this report. The analysis contained in this report is of course the responsibility of the author.

David Fenn
Policynet Communications Ltd.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Women in the B.C. Population	page
1-1	B.C. Population, Female and Male, Selected Years	1
1-2	General Age Categories of the B.C. Population, Female and Male, 1986	2
1-3	Detailed Age Distribution by Gender, British Columbia, 1986	3
1-4	Projected Age Categories of the B.C. Population, Female and Male, 2011	4
1-5	Marital Status of Females in B.C. (Age 15+), Selected Years	5
1-6	B.C. Females Married at Some Time by Age Group (Age 15+), Selected Years	6
1-7	Ethnic Origin of Women in B.C., 1951 and 1986	7
1-8	Total Female Population in B.C. Regions, 1986	8

II.	The Family in B.C.	
2-1	Fertility Rate in B.C. and Canada, Selected Years	9
2-2	Births per 1,000 Women in B.C. by Age Group, Selected Years	10
2-3	Births to Married and Single Mothers in B.C., 1951 and 1988	11
2-4	Family Size in B.C., Selected Years	12
2-5	Family Status of Women in B.C. (Age 15+), 1981 and 1986	13
2-6	Family Structure in B.C., 1981 and 1986	14
2-7	Families with Children at Home in British Columbia, 1986	15
2-8	Lone Female Parent Families in B.C., Selected Years	16
2-9	Divorced Women and Men in British Columbia, Selected Years	17
2-10	Marriages Ending in Divorce in Canada and Regions, 1984-1986	18
2-11	Divorced Women and Men Remarrying in B.C. and Canada, 1984-1986	19
2-12	Married and Lone Parent Females in B.C. with Children under Age 6, 1986	20
2-13	Day Care Spaces in B.C., 1982 and 1987	21

III. Women and Education page

3-1 University Enrolment in Canada, Female and Male, 1971 to 1988..... 22
3-2 University Enrolment in B.C., Full-Time and Part-Time by Gender, 1988..... 23
3-3 B.C. Community College Enrolment, Full-Time and Part-Time by Gender, 1988..... 24
3-4 Female Graduates of Trade and Vocational Programs in Canada, 1984-87..... 25
3-5 Median Years of Schooling in B.C., Female and Male, Age 15+, Selected Years..... 26
3-6 Highest Level of Schooling in B.C. by Gender, 1981..... 27
3-7 Highest Level of Schooling in B.C. by Gender, 1986..... 28
3-8 B.C. University Degree Holders, Female and Male by Age Group, 1986..... 29
3-9 University Degrees Awarded in B.C. by Level and Gender, 1987..... 30
3-10 Major Fields of Study for Females in B.C. (Age 15+), 1986..... 31
3-11 Women as % of First University Degree Recipients in Canada by Subject, 1971 and 1987... 32
3-12 B.C. Female High School Students in Mathematics, 1986 vs. 1988..... 33
3-13 B.C. Female High School Students in Science, 1986 vs. 1988..... 34
3-14 B.C. Female High School Students in Computer Studies, 1986 vs. 1988..... 35
3-15 B.C. Female High School Students in Industrial Education, 1986 vs 1988..... 36
3-16 Full-Time Teachers in B.C., Female and Male, 1987-88..... 37
3-17 Women in B.C. Public School Positions, 1988-1989..... 38
3-18 Female High School Teachers in B.C. by Subject, 1988-1989..... 39

IV. Women in the Labour Force

4-1 B.C. Labour Force (Age 15+), Female and Male, 1966-1989..... 40
4-2 Women Age 15+ as a Per Cent of the B.C. Labour Force, Selected Years..... 41
4-3 Labour Force Participation in B.C., Female and Male (Age 15+), 1966-1989..... 42

IV. Women in the Labour Force cont. page

4-4 Female Labour Force Participation in Canada and Provinces (Age 15+), 1989..... 43
4-5 Labour Force Participation in B.C. by Gender and Age, Selected Years..... 44
4-6 Labour Force Participation in B.C. by Gender and Marital Status, Selected Years..... 45
4-7 Labour Force Participation in Canada by Gender and Education..... 46
4-8 Females in the B.C. Labour Force with Children at Home, Selected Years..... 47
4-9 Labour Force Participation of B.C. Women with Children Home, Selected Years..... 48
4-10 Female and Male Employment in B.C. Goods and Services Sectors, 1988..... 49
4-11 Occupations of the B.C. Labour Force, Female and Male (Age 15+), 1988..... 50
4-12 Full-Time and Part-Time Employment in B.C. by Gender, 1975-1989..... 51
4-13 Full-Time and Part-Time Employment in B.C. by Gender, 1989..... 52
4-14 Self-Employment in B.C. by Gender (Age 15+), Selected Years..... 53
4-15 Female Union Membership in Canada, 1965 and 1987..... 54
4-16 Unemployment Rate in B.C., Female and Male, 1966-1989..... 55

V. Women, Earnings and Income

5-1 Female-Male Earnings Ratios for Full-Time Earners in B.C., Selected Years..... 56
5-2 Female-Male Earnings Ratios for Full-Time Earners by Province, 1988..... 57
5-3 Average Earnings of Women and Men in B.C. by Age Group, 1986..... 58
5-4 Average Earnings of Women and Men in B.C. by Education, 1986..... 59
5-5 Female-Male Earnings Ratios for Selected Occupations in B.C., 1986..... 60
5-6 Average Total Income of Women and Men in B.C. Regions, 1986..... 61
5-7 Family Income in Canada, Selected Years..... 62
5-8 Income Assistance by Family Type in B.C., September, 1989..... 63
5-9 Female Pension Membership in Canada, 1978 and 1988..... 64

VI. Women and Housing page

6-1 Household Size in B.C., Selected Years..... 65
6-2 Household Maintainers in B.C., Female and Male, 1981 and 1986..... 66
6-3 Housing Tenure in B.C., Female and Male, 1988..... 67
6-4 Rent-to-Income Ratios in B.C., Female and Male, 1988..... 68
6-5 Female Rent-to-Income Ratios by Province, 1988... 69

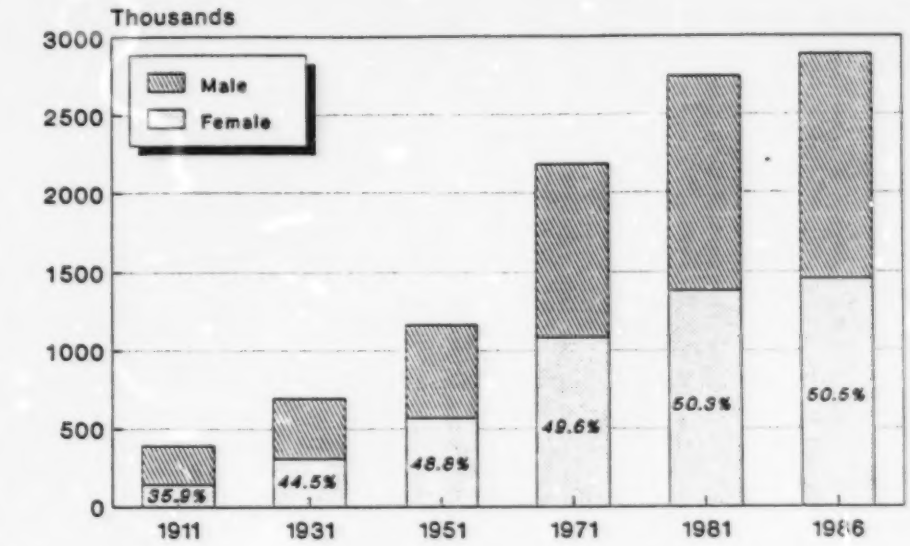
VII. The Health of Women

7-1 Life Expectancy of Females and Males in B.C., Selected Years..... 70
7-2 Canadian Born Life Expectancy in Urban B.C., by Income and Gender, 1986..... 71
7-3 Causes of Death in B.C., Female and Male, 1988... 72
7-4 Leading Causes of Potential Years of Life Lost in B.C. by Gender, 1987..... 73
7-5 Selected Measures of Health, Females and Males in B.C., 1986..... 74
7-6 Cigarette Smokers in Canada, Female and Male, Selected Years..... 75
7-7 Alcohol Use in B.C., Female and Male, 1987..... 76
7-8 Drug Use in B.C., Female and Male, 1987..... 77

I. Women in the B.C. Population

Figure 1-1

B.C. Population
Female and Male, Selected Years



Census Data

A Changing Female-Male Mix in British Columbia

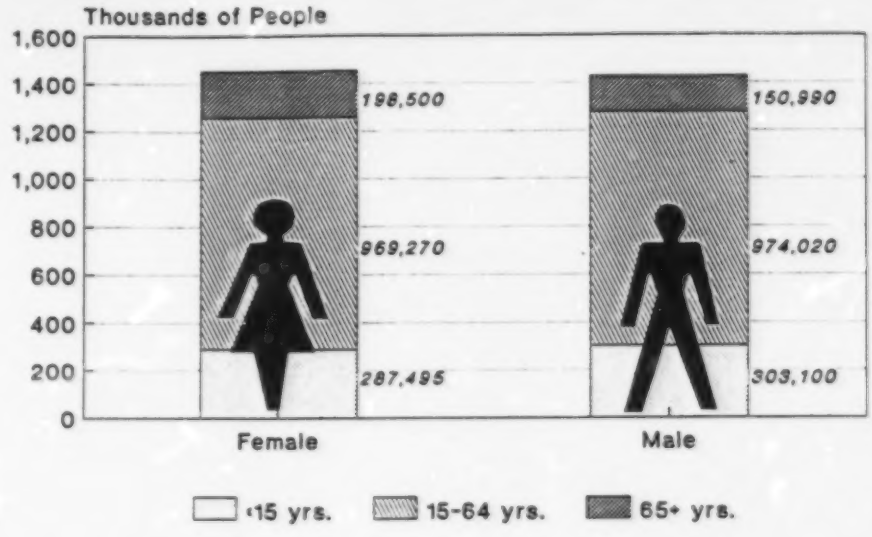
From the time British Columbia joined Confederation until the mid-1970s, men in the province always outnumbered women. Much of this imbalance was due to the fact that most immigrants to B.C. and Canada prior to 1971 were male.

As Figure 1-1 illustrates, females comprised only 35.9% of the B.C. population in 1911. Since then, the proportion of women gradually increased to a point in the 1970s where women in B.C. outnumbered men. As of 1986, there were 1.46 million women in B.C., representing 50.5% of the population.

Part of the shift in the ratio of females to males in the province is due to the increases in life expectancy over the past century, which have consistently favoured women. The result is that women constitute a significantly larger share of the elderly population.

Figure 1-2

General Age Categories of the B.C. Population, Female and Male, 1986



1986 Census

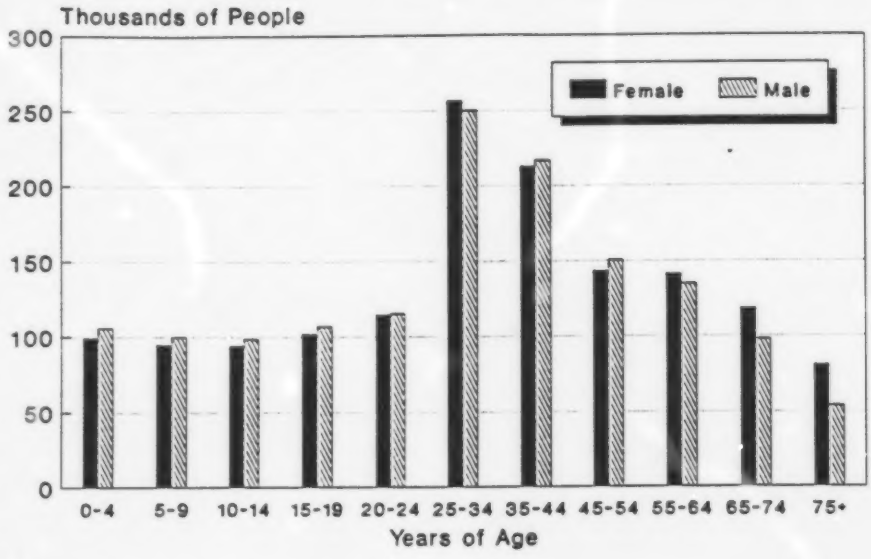
An Elderly Female Population

As illustrated in Figure 1-2, there were 1.46 million women and 1.43 million men in British Columbia in 1986. Within the under 15 years age group there were less girls than boys- 287,495 females versus 303,100 males.

In the working age population (15-64 years) there were also less women than men- 969,270 females versus 974,020 men. In the seniors' category (65 years and over), however, there were many more women than men- 198,500 females versus 150,990 males. The greater share of females in the elderly population represents a consistent pattern across Canada.

Figure 1-3

Detailed Age Distribution by Gender, British Columbia, 1986



1986 Census

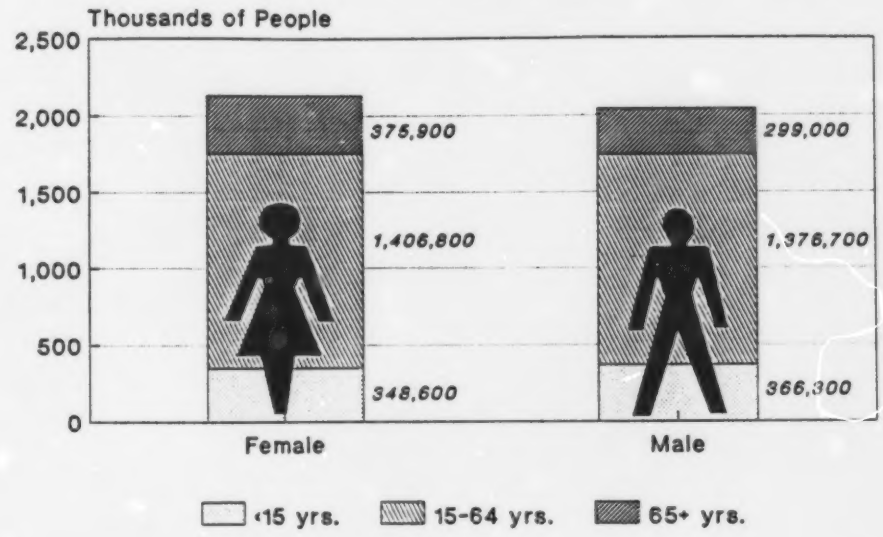
Age Structure- A Closer Look

Figure 1-3 shows the number of women and men in detailed age groups in B.C. in 1986. From birth to age 24, there were more males than females in the province. In the 25-34 age group, there were more females than males, due in part to a larger net migration of women than men to B.C. in that age category. From age 35 to age 54, there were again more males than females in the population.

From age 55 onward, there was an increasingly greater number of females to males in the province due to the greater life expectancy of women. For example, females comprised 60% of the B.C. population aged 75 years and over in 1986.

Figure 1-4

Projected Age Categories of the B.C. Population, Female and Male, 2011



B.C. Central Statistics Bureau, 1989

More Seniors in the Future

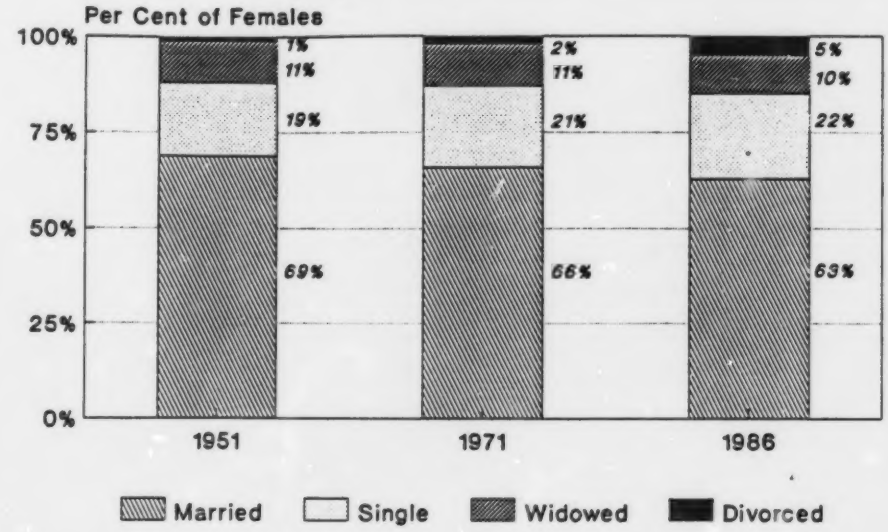
Figure 1-4 shows population projections in the year 2011 for women and men in British Columbia. It is estimated that the B.C. female population will be 2.13 million in 2011, up from 1.46 million in 1986. The male population estimate is 2.04 million in 2011, up from 1.43 million in 1986.

Among seniors, it is projected that women aged 65 years and over will comprise approximately 17.6% of the B.C. female population in 2011. In 1986, as already seen in Figure 1-2, women in this age group comprised about 13.6% of the total female population. The elderly male population is projected to comprise 14.6% of the total male population in 2011, an increase from 10.6% in 1986.

The elderly female population is also projected to be larger than the elderly male population in 2011 (375,900 women aged 65 years and over versus 299,000 men). This represents a similar mix of seniors as exists in British Columbia today.

Figure 1-5

Marital Status of Females in B.C. (Age 15+), Selected Years



Census Data

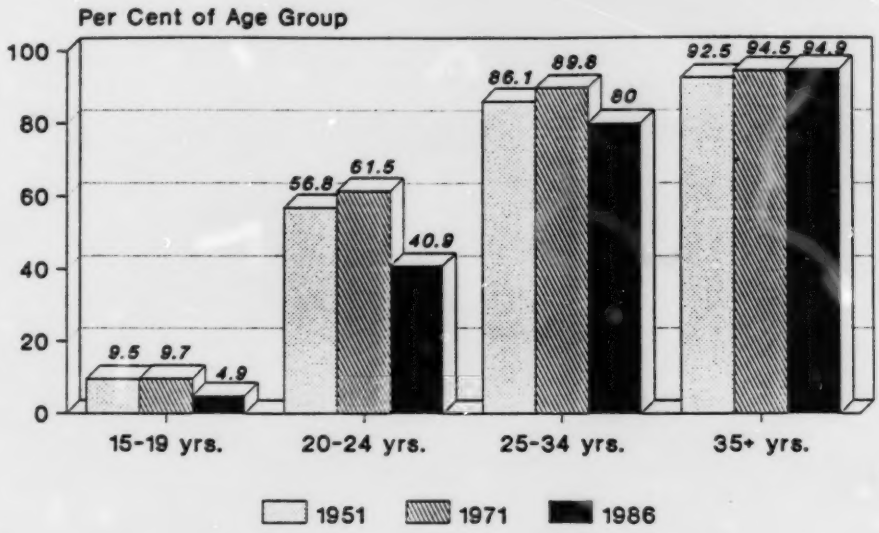
Majority of B.C. Women are Married

As shown in Figure 1-5, 63% of B.C. women were married in 1986. This represents a slight decrease since 1971 when 66% of females were married, and a further decrease from 1951 when 69% were married.

Although marriage remains a strong institution in British Columbia, it is evident that more females today are considering other options. For example, the percentage of single (never married) females rose from 19% in 1951 to 22% in 1986. Moreover, the percentage of divorced women increased from 1% in 1951 to 5% in 1986. The greater number of divorced women represents the most significant change in marital status over the past 35 years.

Figure 1-6

B.C. Women Married at Some Time by Age Group (Age 15+), Selected Years



Census Data

Women are Marrying Later in Life

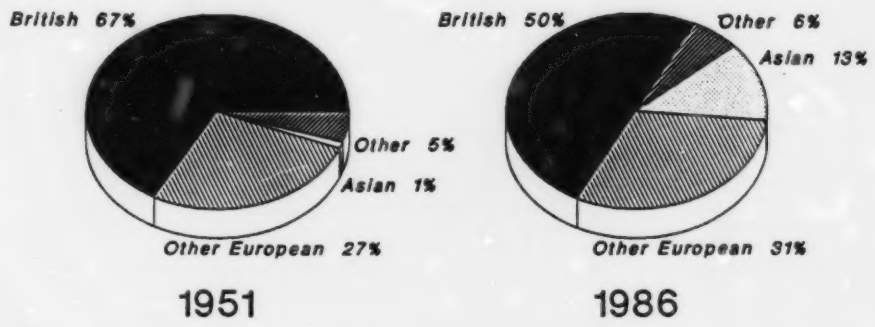
A greater number of young British Columbia women are choosing to delay marriage. This change has occurred primarily since the 1970s.

As seen in Figure 1-6, between 1951 and 1971 the percentage of young B.C. females who were married increased slightly. Some 9.7% of 15-19 year old females were married in 1971, up from 9.5% in 1951. Also, 61.5% of females aged 20-24 years were married in 1971- an increase from 56.8% in 1951.

From 1971 to 1986, the trend towards early marriages reversed. In 1986 only 4.9% of females aged 15-19 years were married (down from 9.7%), and only 40.9% of females aged 20-24 years were married (down from 61.5%).

Figure 1-7

Ethnic Origin of Women in B.C., 1951 and 1986



1951 1986

Census Data

An Ethnically Diverse Female Population

As illustrated in Figure 1-7, the female population in British Columbia has become more ethnically diverse in the past 35 years.

In 1951, 67% of B.C. females were of British origin; 27% were Other European; 5% were Native or Other; and 1% were of Asian origin.

In 1986, only 50% of females reported to be of single Asian origin. Women with a single origin from elsewhere in Europe increased to 31%. The greatest change, however, occurred among females with a single Asian origin. This group comprised 13% of single origin females in 1986. (Note: 1951 data are based on the ethnic origin of the respondents' fathers only, while 1986 data are based on respondents with a common ethnic parentage).

Factors such as different source countries of recent immigrants to B.C. are creating a more heterogeneous female population. The result is that the female population in B.C. today is one with a very different background and service need than the one which existed in the immediate post-war period.

Figure 1-8

Total Female Population in B.C. Regions, 1986

Development Region	Female Population	% Females in Region
Vancouver Island/Cst	274,080	51.0%
Mainland/Southwest	794,850	50.8%
Thompson/Okanagan	171,580	50.4%
Kootenay	65,740	49.6%
Cariboo	72,695	48.8%
Northeast	27,605	48.2%
North Coast	29,890	47.8%
Nechako	18,825	47.7%

1986 Census

More Males in Rural B.C.

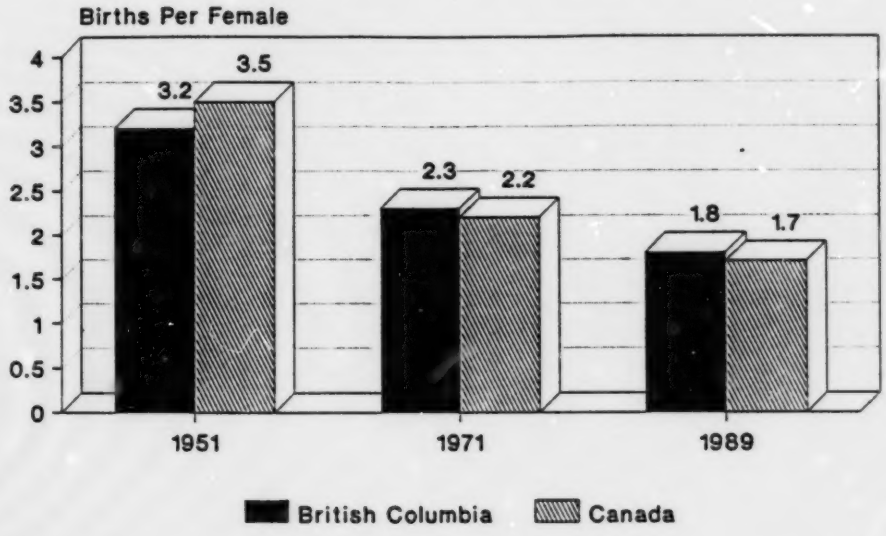
Figure 1-8 shows the numbers and percentages of females in British Columbia's eight development regions.

Females are more concentrated in heavily urban regions such as the Mainland/Southwest and Vancouver Island. Fewer females are concentrated in rural areas of central and northern British Columbia. A major reason is that rural-based resource industries have traditionally caused an in-migration of male rather than female workers and job-seekers.

II. The Family in B.C.

Figure 2-1

Fertility Rate in B.C. and Canada, Selected Years



B.C. Vital Statistics, Statistics Canada

Women are Having Less Children

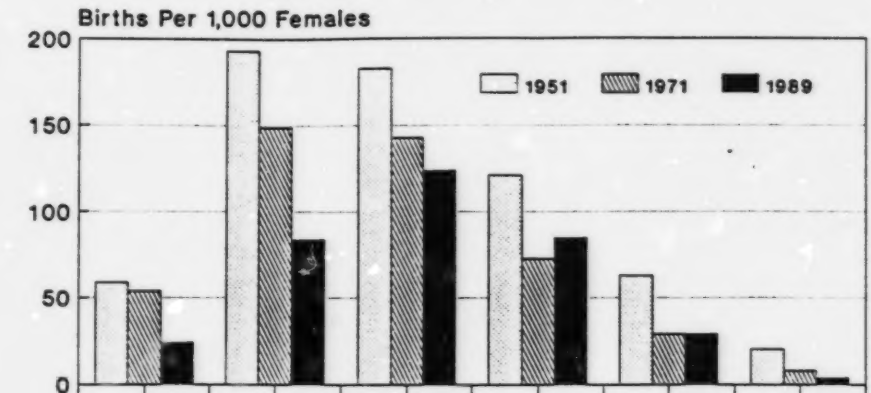
Women in British Columbia are having less children than previously. As illustrated in Figure 2-1, a B.C. woman had an average of 3.2 births in 1951, compared to 2.3 births in 1971 and 1.7 births in 1986. Canada as a whole had comparable birth rates to B.C. over the time period.

Although not shown in the chart above, the current fertility level of 1.7 births is less than half the rate recorded during the baby boom in 1959, when a Canadian woman had an average of nearly 4 children.

The 1.7 rate is below the level of 2.1 births per female, which is considered the "replacement level" for a given population. The decline in fertility rates since the 1950s is not unique to B.C. or Canada, but has occurred throughout Western industrialized countries.

Figure 2-2

Births Per 1,000 Women in B.C. by Age Group, Selected Years



	15-19 yrs.	20-24 yrs.	25-29 yrs.	30-34 yrs.	35-39 yrs.	40-44 yrs.
1951	59	193	183	121	63	20
1971	54	149	143	73	29	8
1989	24	84	124	85	29	4

B.C. Vital Statistics

Women are Having Children Later

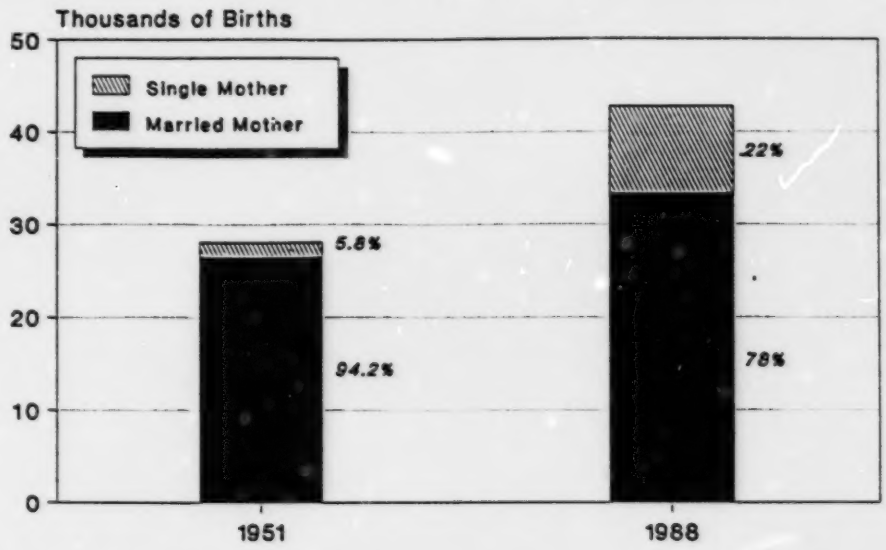
While women in British Columbia are having less children, they are also giving birth to children later in life.

As seen in Figure 2-2, in the single year 1951 the 20-24 year female age group had the highest birth rate in the province (193 births per 1,000 females). In 1989, however, both the 25-29 and 30-34 year age groups had higher birth rates than the 20-24 year age group.

It is noteworthy that the birth rate among the 15-19 year old category also dropped dramatically since the early 1970s. In 1971, women between 15 and 19 years of age had 54 births per 1,000 females; in 1989 the rate was only 24 births.

Figure 2-3

Births to Married and Single Mothers in B.C., 1951 and 1988



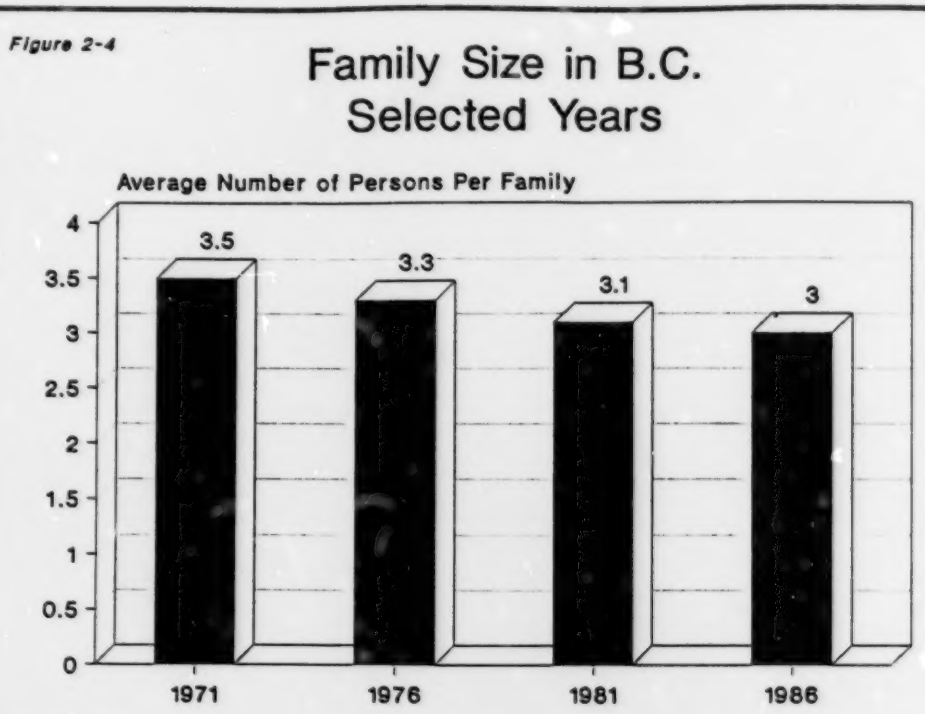
1951 Census, B.C. Vital Statistics 1989

One in Five Births are to Single Mothers

As illustrated in Figure 2-3, single mothers accounted for approximately 22% of the 42,732 births in British Columbia in 1988. This represents a significant increase since 1951, when only 5.8% of the 28,077 births in the province were to single mothers.

Although not shown in this chart, the relative number of births to single mothers is high among younger females, and declines among older females. For example, 78% of all births to women under 20 years of age in B.C. were to single mothers in 1988, as opposed to only 12% of births in the 30-34 year age category.

Figure 2-4



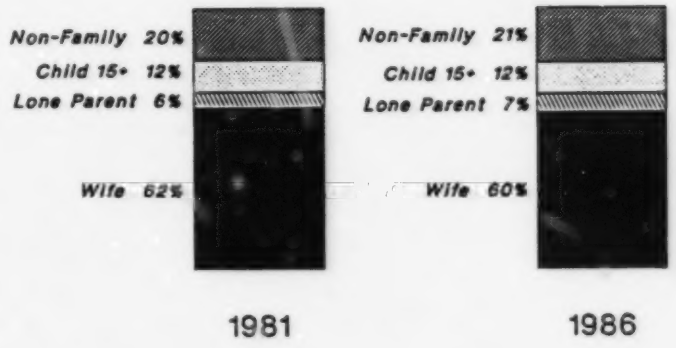
Smaller Families

Consistent with a dropping birth rate in the province, the size of the average family in British Columbia has also decreased. A family refers both to husband-wife and single parent families.

As illustrated in Figure 2-4, the average family size in B.C. in 1971 was 3.5 persons. In 1986, the average family size was just 3 persons.

Figure 2-5

Family Status of Women in B.C. (Age 15+), 1981 and 1986



Census Data

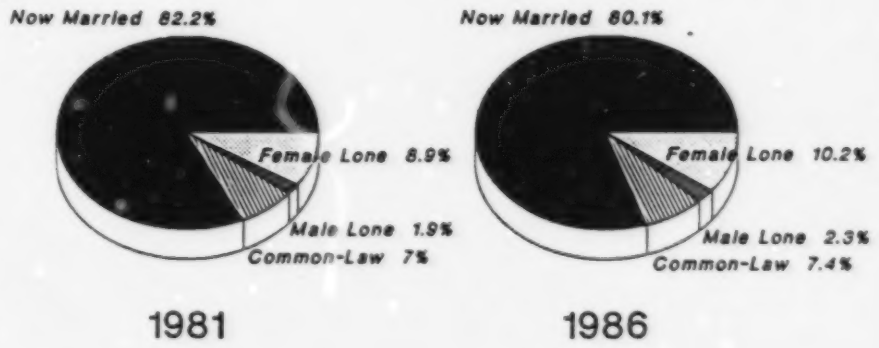
The Importance of Family in British Columbia

As illustrated in Figure 2-5, approximately four out of five B.C. women aged 15 years and over lived in a family setting in 1986. Sixty per cent of females were married or lived in a common-law relationship, 7% were lone parents, 12% were children living at home, while 21% were in non-family environments.

Since 1981, the percentage of females in lone parent situations increased from 6% to 7%. Moreover, the percentage of females living alone or in non-family settings increased from 20% to 21%. These changes in the family status of women are consistent with a gradual, longer-term trend away from "traditional" living arrangements in British Columbia.

Figure 2-6

Family Structure in B.C. 1981 and 1986



Census Data

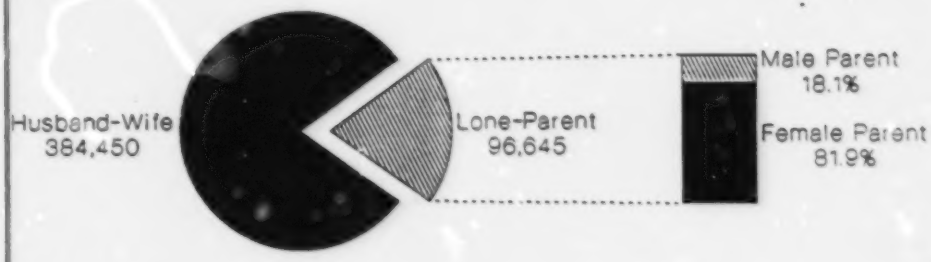
A Changing Family Structure

The gradual move from "traditional" to "non-traditional" families in British Columbia is seen in Figure 2-6. In 1981, 82.2% of B.C. families were husband-wife relationships, 7% were common law relationships, 8.9% were female lone-parent families, and 1.9% were male lone-parent families.

In 1986, the percentage of husband-wife families decreased to 80.1%, while common law families increased to 7.4%, female lone-parent families increased to 10.2%, and male lone-parent families rose to 2.3%. These changes in family structure are apparent in provinces across Canada.

Figure 2-7

Families with Children at Home in British Columbia, 1986



1986 Census

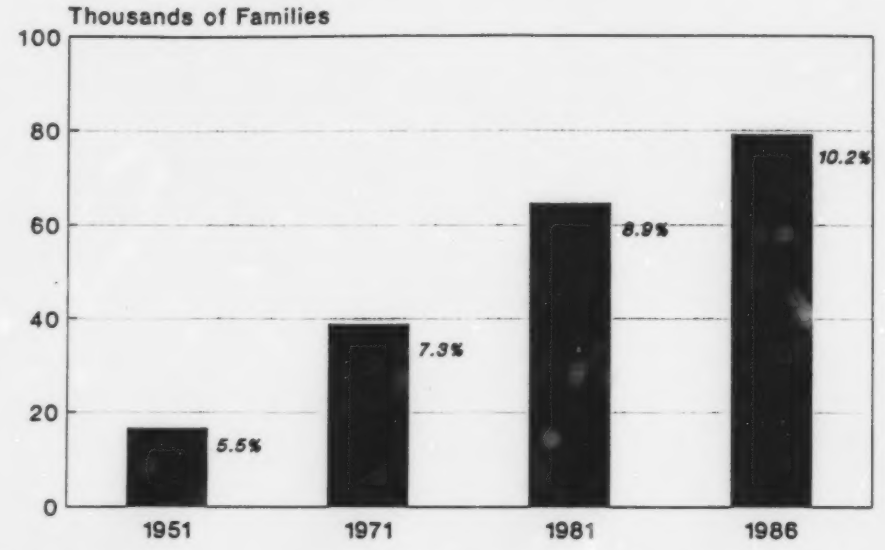
The Significance of Lone-Parent Families

In British Columbia in 1986, approximately one out of every five families with children at home were headed by only one parent.

As seen in Figure 2-7, there were 384,450 husband-wife families with children at home, and 96,645 lone-parent families with children at home in 1986. Of the lone-parent families, 81.9% were headed by a female, while 18.1% were headed by a male.

Figure 2-8

Lone Female Parent Families in B.C., Selected Years



Census Data

Note: % refers to lone female parents as % of all families.

Increase in Female Lone-Parent Families

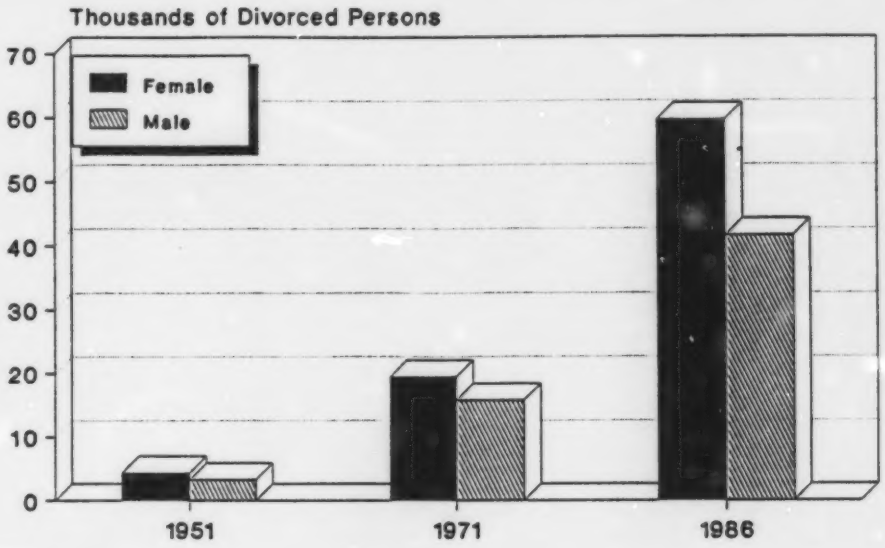
One of the greatest changes in family structure in British Columbia has been the increase in the number of female lone-parent families.

As illustrated in Figure 2-8, in 1951 there were 16,542 lone-parent families in B.C. headed by a female, representing 5.5% of all families. In 1971 the number of female lone-parent families had increased to 38,860, representing 7.3% of families.

In 1981, there were 64,565 female lone-parent families, representing 8.9% of families. By 1986, there were 79,145 female lone-parent families, representing 10.2%. Today, one out of ten families in British Columbia is a lone-parent family headed by a female.

Figure 2-9

Divorced Women and Men in British Columbia, Selected Years



Census Data

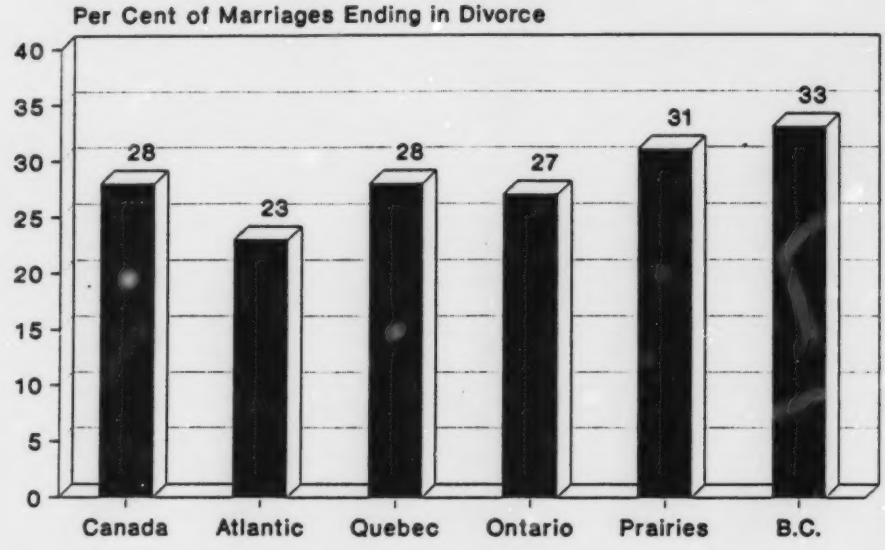
The Growth in Divorce

The number of divorced persons in British Columbia increased significantly since 1951. As seen in Figure 2-9, in 1951 there were 4,381 divorced women and 3,249 divorced men (who were not remarried) in the province. In 1971, the numbers of divorced women and men grew to 19,430 and 15,760 respectively. In 1986, there were 59,675 divorced women and 41,595 divorced men in British Columbia.

The greater number of divorced women than divorced men in the province is due to the fact that men are more likely to remarry following a divorce than are women.

Figure 2-10

Marriages Ending in Divorce in Canada and Regions, 1984-1986



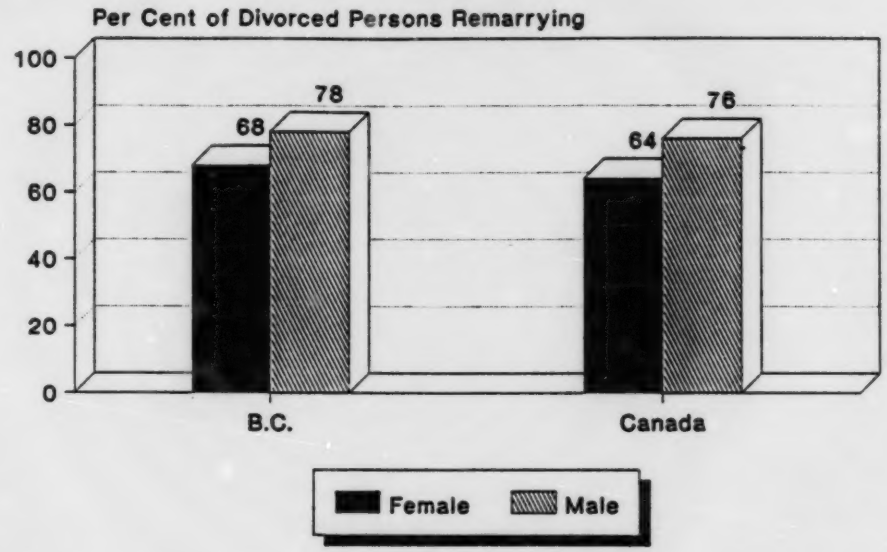
Statistics Canada, 1988 (#84-205)

British Columbia is the Divorce Leader

From data collected between 1984 and 1986, British Columbia was shown to have the highest rate of divorce in Canada. As illustrated in Figure 2-10, 33% of marriages in British Columbia end in divorce, followed by the Prairies (31%), Quebec (28%), Ontario (27%), and Atlantic Canada (23%). The Canadian divorce rate was 28 per cent.

Figure 2-11

Divorced Women and Men Remarrying in B.C. and Canada, 1984-86



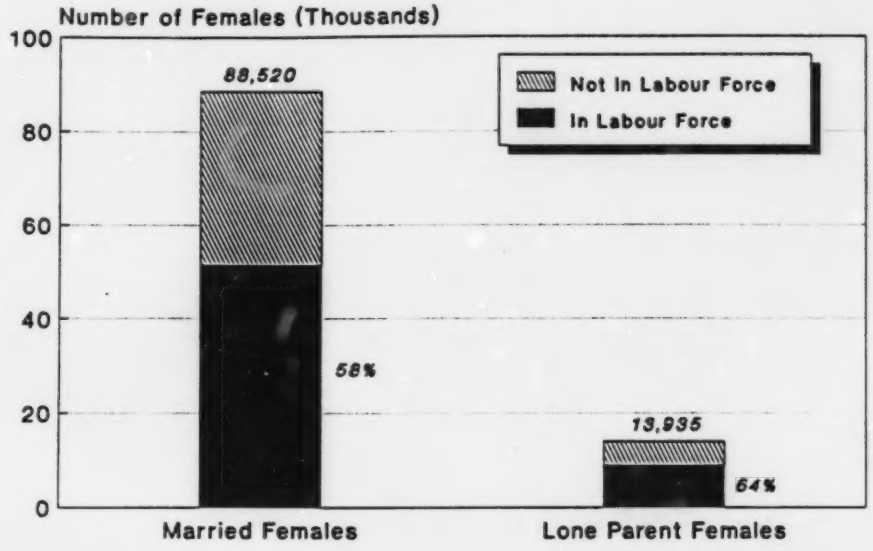
Statistics Canada, 1988 (#84-205)

Marriage Turnover in British Columbia

As seen in Figure 2-11, a large proportion of divorced persons choose to remarry. From data collected between 1984 and 1986, 68% of divorced women and 78% divorced men in British Columbia were found to remarry. These rates of marriage turnover are slightly higher than the rates for Canada as a whole.

Figure 2-12

Married and Lone Parent Females in B.C. with Children under Age 6, 1986



Census Data

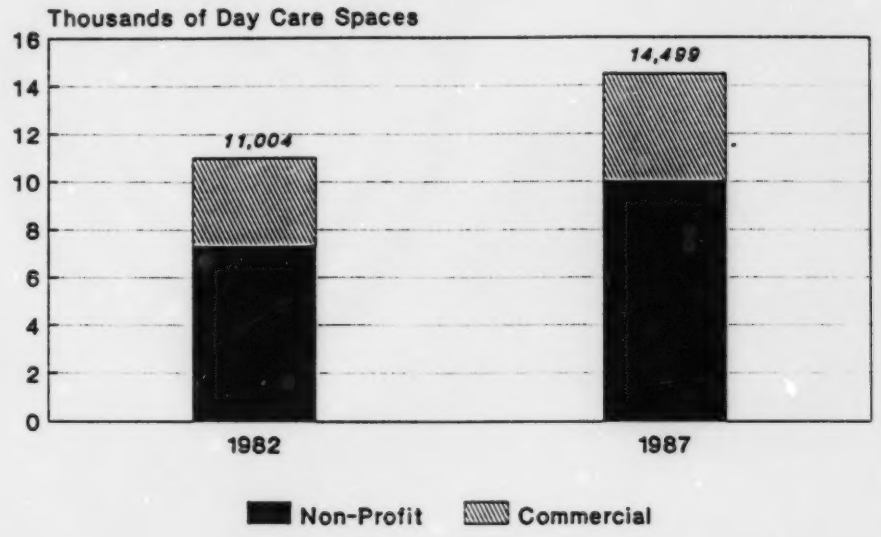
Day Care Demand for Young Children

A large number of B.C. women today are in need of day care services for their young children.

As seen in Figure 2-12, in 1986 there were 88,520 married females with children under 6 years of age. Of these women, 58% (51,000 women) were in the labour force. Among lone parent females, there were 13,935 in B.C. with children under 6 years old. Sixty-four per cent (or 9,000 women) were active in the labour force. In total, approximately 60,000 women were in the B.C. labour force in 1986 with children under 6 years of age.

Figure 2-13

Day Care Spaces in B.C. 1982 and 1987



Health and Welfare Canada, 1988

Supply of Day Care Spaces

As a greater number of women with young children have entered the labour force, the supply of day care centre spaces in B.C. has gradually increased.

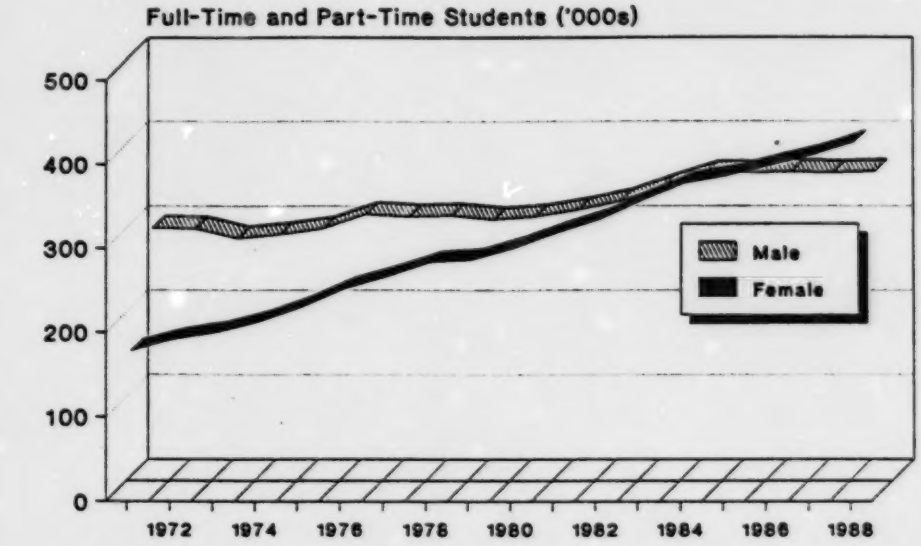
As seen in Figure 2-13, in 1987 there were 14,499 day care centre spaces in B.C., up from 11,004 spaces in 1982. Approximately 7 out of 10 spaces are provided through non-profit services.

Although not shown in the chart above, about 80% of day care services in Canada are used by children under 6 years of age. As well, the average expenditure on day care centres for a Canadian family with children under 6 years of age was $1,414 in 1986.

III. Women and Education

Figure 3-1

University Enrolment in Canada Female and Male, 1971 to 1988



Statistics Canada, 1990 (#89-503E)

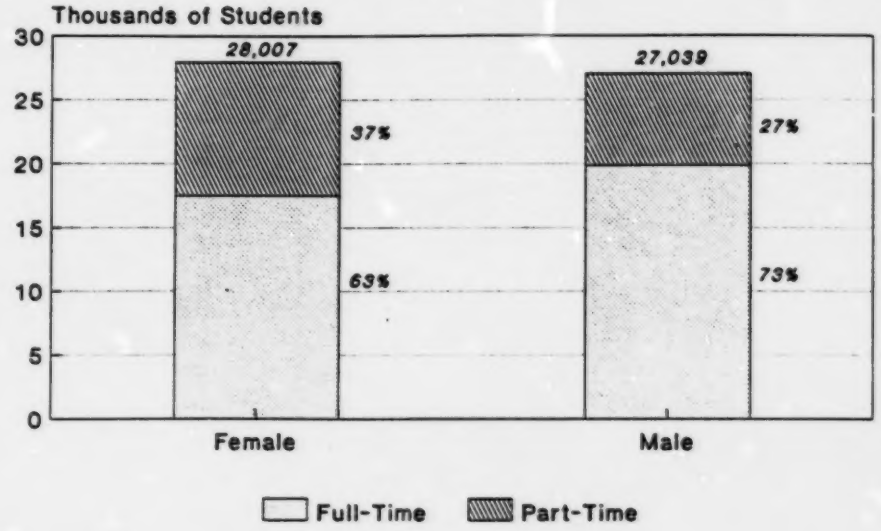
Rise in Female University Enrolment

One of the most dramatic changes in the composition of university enrolment in Canada is the increased participation of females since the early 1970s.

As shown in Figure 3-1, there were only 172,000 full-time and part-time female students in Canadian universities in 1971, compared to 294,000 male students. By the early 1980s, female university students outnumbered male students for the first time. In 1988, approximately 420,000 female students attended university in Canada versus 361,000 men.

Figure 3-2

University Enrolment in B.C. Full-Time and Part-Time by Gender, 1988



Statistics Canada, 1989 (#81-229)

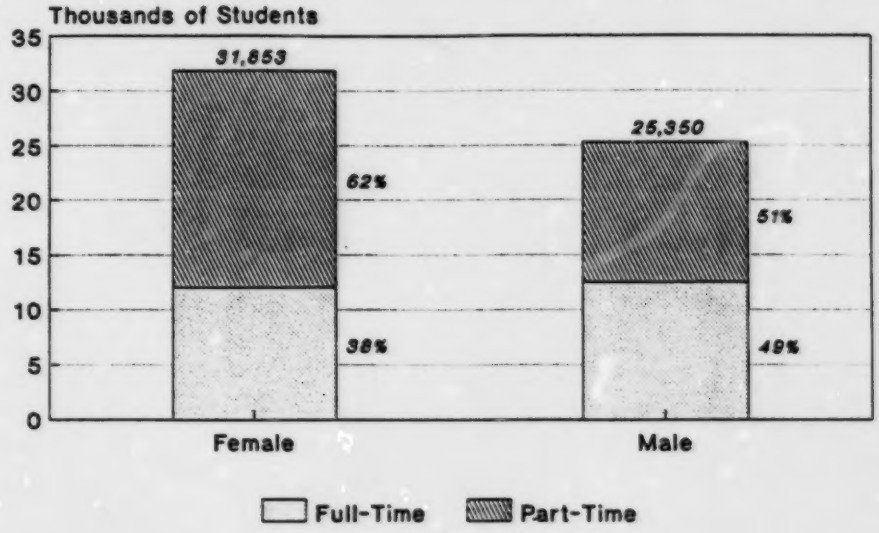
Females and Part-Time University Enrolment

While more women than men attended university in British Columbia in 1988, women were more concentrated in part-time rather than full-time studies.

As illustrated in Figure 3-2, approximately 17,600 women attended university on a full-time basis in 1988, representing 63% of all female university students. In the same year, there were 19,700 full-time male students, representing 73% of total male university enrolment.

Figure 3-3

B.C. Community College Enrolment Full-Time and Part-Time by Gender, 1988



Statistics Canada, 1989 (#81-229)

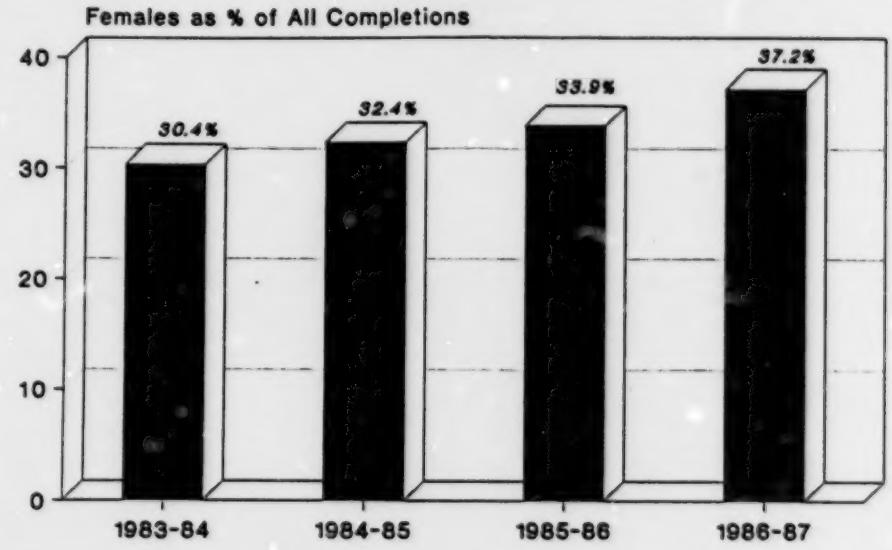
Females and Part-time College Enrolment

Similar to the enrolment pattern at universities, there are many more women than men attending community colleges in British Columbia on a part-time basis.

Figure 3-3 shows that more women than men attended community college in the province in 1988 (31,853 women versus 25,350 men). However, approximately 62% of the 31,853 female community college students were enrolled on a part-time basis, compared to only 51% of male students.

Figure 3-4

Female Graduates of Trade and Vocational Programs in Canada, 1984-87



Statistics Canada, 1990 (#89-503E)

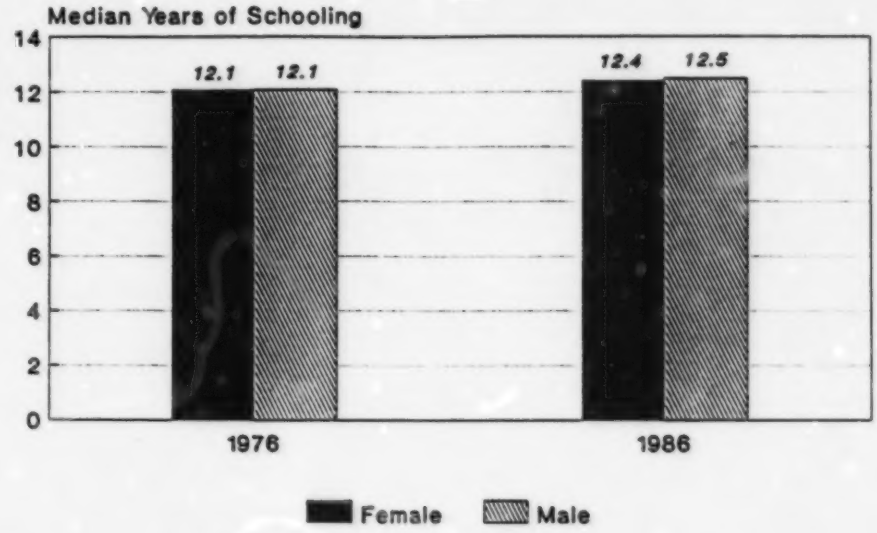
More Female Trade and Vocational Graduates

As female participation has increased at both the university and community college levels, a greater percentage of women are also graduating from trade and vocational programs in Canada.

As shown in Figure 3-4, in the 1983-84 school year approximately 30.4% of trade and vocational graduates were women. By the 1986-87 school year the percentage of female graduates had increased to 37.2%. Although not apparent in the above chart, it is important to note that Canadian females are more concentrated in vocational-oriented programs than trades. For example, within registered apprenticeship programs in 1986-87, only 3% of Canadian apprentices were women.

Figure 3-5

Median Years of Schooling in B.C. Female and Male, Age 15+, Selected Years



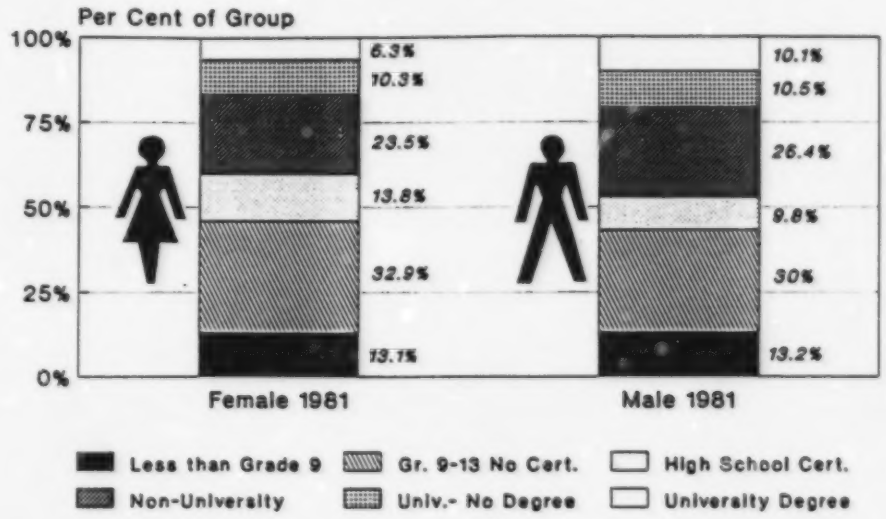
Statistics Canada, 1989 (#81-229)

A Better Educated Population

Figure 3-5 shows an improving level of education for the British Columbia population. In 1976, the median years of schooling for both women and men aged 15 years and over was 12.1 years in 1976. In 1986, B.C. women had 12.4 median years of schooling, while B.C. men had 12.5 years.

Figure 3-6

Highest Level of Schooling in B.C. by Gender (Age 15+), 1981



1981 Census

Education (1981): A Closer Look

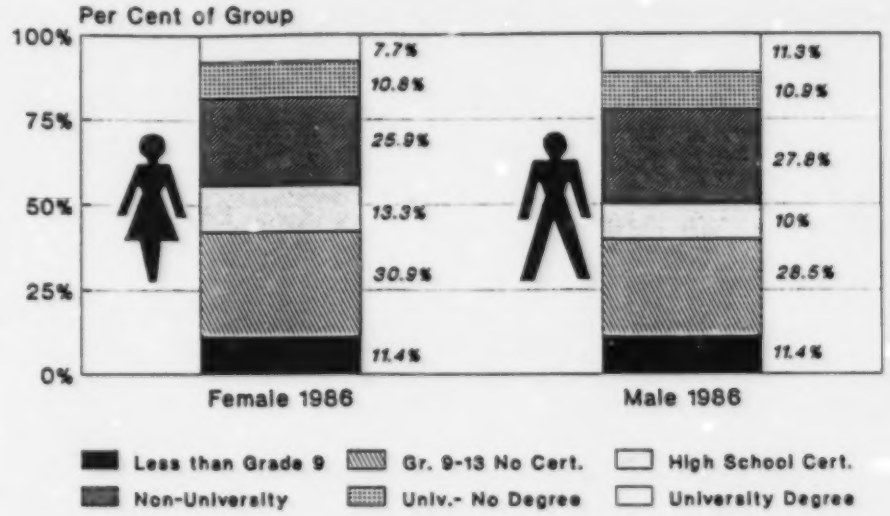
The increasing level of education within the British Columbia population is seen more precisely in Figures 3-6 and 3-7.

As shown in Figure 3-6, in 1981 the percentage of least educated persons (less than grade 9 education) were similar for both the female and male populations in the province. Some 13.1% of women and 13.2% of men aged 15 years and over had less than grade 9 education in this year.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, there were relatively less women than men in British Columbia with a university degree. Approximately 6.3% of women and 10.1% of men had university degrees in 1981.

Figure 3-7

Highest Level of Schooling in B.C. by Gender (Age 15+), 1986



1986 Census

Education (1986): A Closer Look

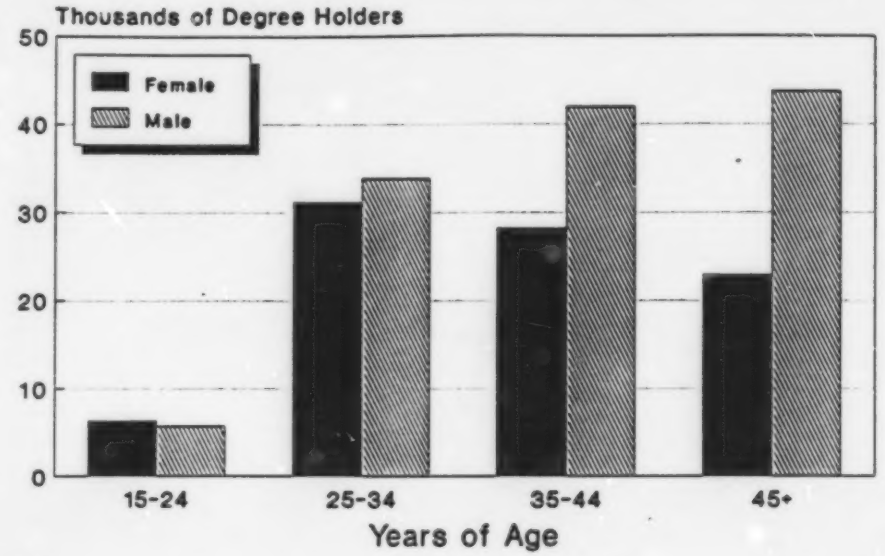
As illustrated in Figure 3-7, both the female and male populations in British Columbia were better educated in 1986.

Among those with the least education, only 11.4% of both women and men had less than grade 9 education in 1986 (down from 13.1% and 13.2% respectively in 1981).

At the other end of the education spectrum, 7.7% of women and 11.3% of men in B.C. had university degrees in 1986. These levels are up from 1981 when 6.3% of women and 10.1% of men had graduated from university.

Figure 3-8

B.C. University Degree Holders Female and Male by Age Group, 1986



1986 Census

The Female Breakthrough in University Education

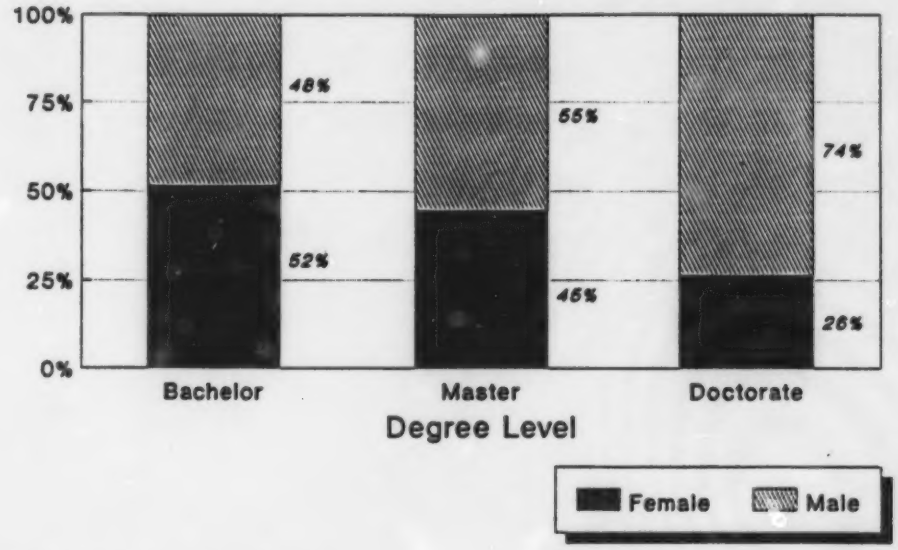
The female breakthrough in higher education is apparent when the number of female and male degree holders is examined by age group.

As seen in Figure 3-8, in 1986 there were more male than female graduates in every age group except the 15-24 year old age category. In the 45 year and over category, there were 22,950 female degree holders, representing 34% of all degree holders in that group. In the 35-44 year age category, there were 28,245 female degree holders, representing 40% of all degree holders in that group.

The female-male split narrowed further in the 25-34 year old category, as 31,190 female degree holders represented 48% of male and female degree holders in that age group. Finally, in the 15-24 year old age category, there were 6,380 female degree holders, representing 53% of all degree holders in that age group. Within the younger generation, more women than men are receiving university degrees.

Figure 3-9

University Degrees Awarded in B.C. by Level and Gender, 1987



Statistics Canada, 1989 (#81-229)

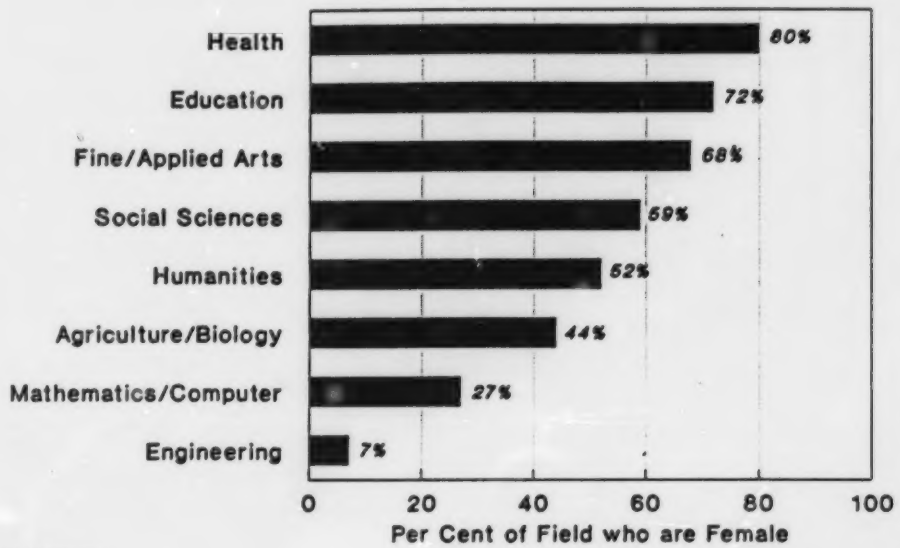
Female Degree Barriers in University Education

While women in British Columbia have made great strides in university participation and in the obtaining of degrees, women are still underrepresented in the number of graduate degrees awarded in the province.

As seen in Figure 3-9, more women than men received Bachelor's degrees in B.C. in the single school year 1987-88. Some 52% of Bachelor's degrees were awarded to women in this year. However, at the Master's level only 45% of degrees were awarded to women (625 women received degrees compared to 776 men). At the Doctoral level, only 26% of degrees were awarded to women (67 women received doctorates in 1987-88 versus 187 men). Although the number of women receiving graduate degrees has increased in the past two decades, it is apparent that many women are still not choosing graduate level studies at universities in the province.

Figure 3-10

Major Fields of Study for Females in B.C. (Age 15+), 1986



1986 Census

Female Subject Barriers in Post-Secondary Education

Along with underrepresentation at the university graduate degree level, women are also underrepresented in particular fields of post-secondary study, as evidenced in Figure 3-10.

In the areas of engineering and mathematics/computer studies, females comprised only 7% and 27% of the respective disciplines in 1986. In the areas of health, education, and fine arts, females tend to be overrepresented.

It is important to note that the above data represent a "stock" position for all British Columbians enrolled in post-secondary studies prior to or during 1986. Changes in fields of study, however, have been occurring, as seen in the next chart.

Figure 3-11 **Women as % of First University Degree Recipients in Canada by Subject**

Field of Study	1971 - % Female	1987 - % Female
Education	52.8%	70.1%
Health	48.6%	69.9%
Fine and Applied Arts	54.9%	63.7%
Humanities	47.0%	62.6%
Agriculture/Biology	39.2%	56.6%
Social Sciences	26.0%	51.8%
Mathematics/Computer	19.4%	28.5%
Engineering	1.2%	12.2%

Statistics Canada, 1990 (#89-503E)

Changes in Female University Subject Areas

Figure 3-11 shows some significant changes in the concentration of Canadian women in particular fields of study for first university degrees.

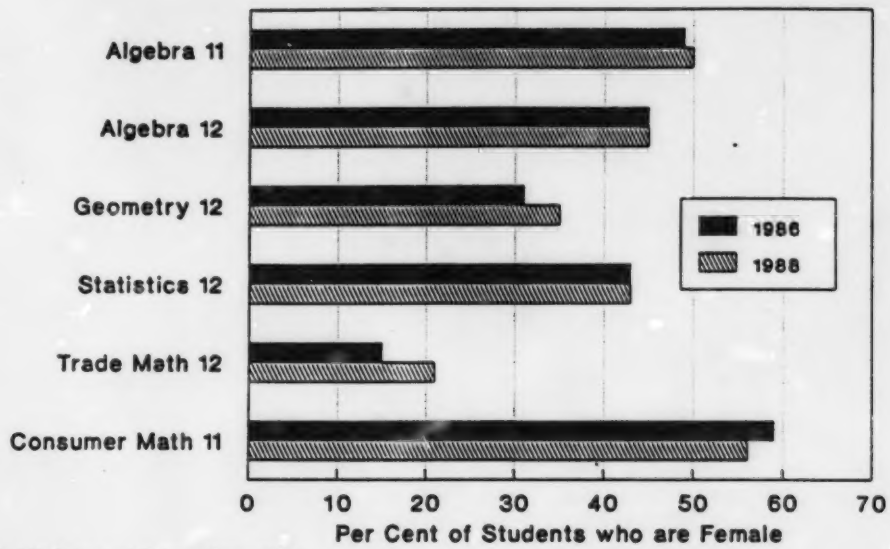
Among the most female concentrated areas, female representation in education increased from 52.8% in 1971 to 70.1% in 1987; in health from 48.6% in 1971 to 69.9% in 1987; and in fine arts from 54.9% in 1971 to 63.7% in 1987.

Women in Canada also made significant gains in the areas of the humanities (47% to 62.6%), social sciences (26% to 51.8%), and agriculture and biology (39.2% to 56.6%).

The areas where women remain underrpresented are engineering and mathematics/computer studies, although changes have occurred since the early 1970s. In 1971, only 1.2% of first university degree recipients in engineering were women; by 1987 the percentage increased to 12.2%. Among degree recipients in mathematics/computer studies, only 19.4% were women in 1971; in 1987 the percentage increased moderately to 28.5%. The traditionally male-dominated subject areas of engineering and mathematics are slowly changing, but female underrepresentation in these fields is still very apparent.

Figure 3-12

B.C. Female High School Students in Mathematics, 1986 vs. 1988



B.C. Ministry of Education, 1990

Improvements in Female Representation in High School Mathematics

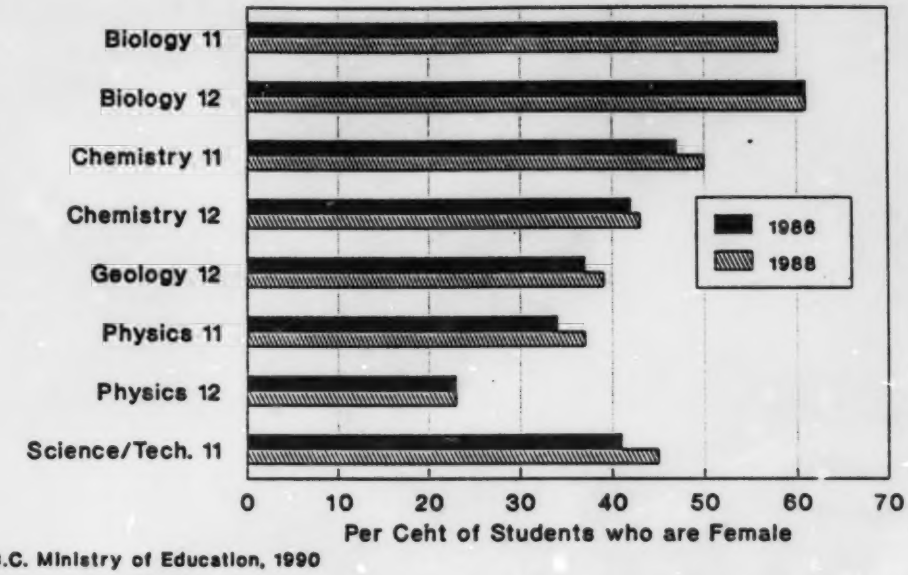
Figure 3-12 shows some small improvements in the representation of females in selected B.C. high school mathematics classes between the 1986/87 and 1988/89 school years.

The percentage of Algebra 11 students who are female increased from 49% to 50%; the percentage of female Geometry 12 students rose from 31% to 35%; and the concentration of females in Trade Math 12 rose from 15% to 21%. The only area where there was a decline in female representation was in Consumer Math 11, where the percentage of women declined from 59% to 56%.

The following three charts show changes in female representation in other traditionally male fields of study in B.C. high schools. These subject areas are science, computer studies and industrial education.

Figure 3-13

B.C. Female High School Students in Science, 1986 vs. 1988



B.C. Ministry of Education, 1990

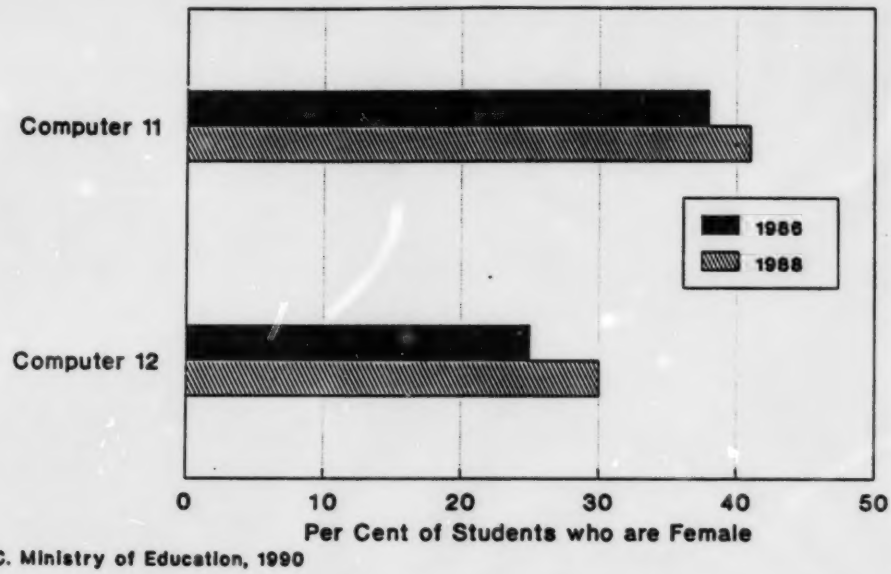
Improvements in Female Representation in High School Science

Figure 3-13 shows female representation gains in selected B.C. high school science classes between the 1986/87 and 1988/89 school years.

In Chemistry 11 female representation increased from 47% to 50%; in Chemistry 12 female representation rose from 42% to 43%; Geology 12 saw a rise from 37% to 39%; in Physics 11 the percentage of female students rose from 34% to 37%; and finally in Science and Technology 11, female representation rose from 41% to 45%.

Fig. 3-14

B.C. Female High School Students in Computer Studies, 1986 vs. 1988



B.C. Ministry of Education, 1990

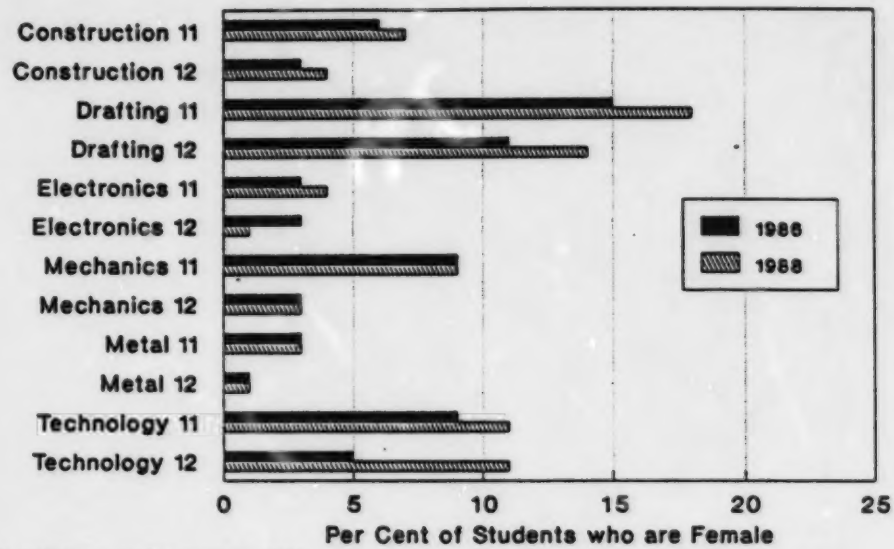
Improvements in Female Representation in High School Computer Studies

Figure 3-14 highlights improvements in female representation in selected B.C. high school computer studies courses between 1986/87 and 1988/89.

The percentage of female Computer 11 students increased from 38% to 41% over the time period; in Computer 12 the percentage of students who are female rose from 25% to 30%.

Fig. 3-15

B.C. Female High School Students in Industrial Education, 1986 vs. 1988



B.C. Ministry of Education, 1990

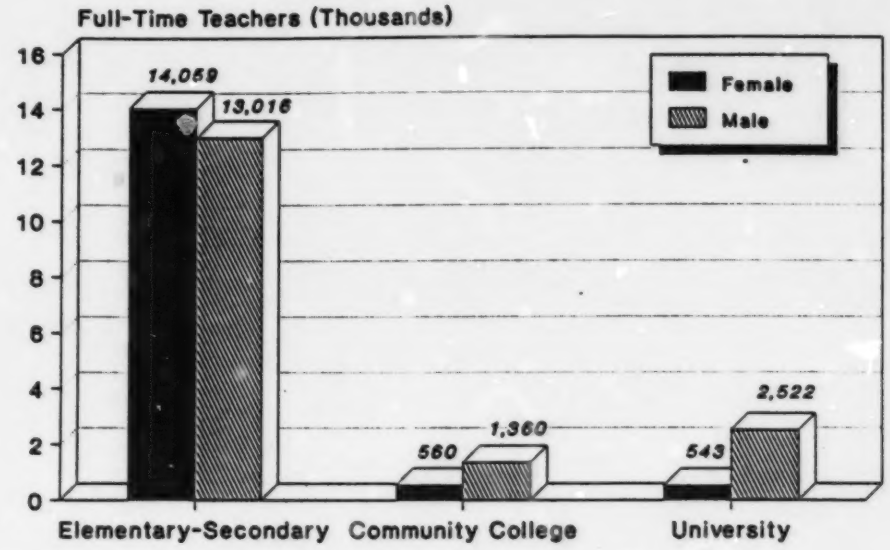
Improvements in Female Representation in High School Industrial Education

Figure 3-15 shows female representation gains in selected B.C. high school industrial education courses between 1986/87 and 1988/89.

Females recorded the largest increases in representation in Drafting 11 (15% to 18%); Drafting 12 (11% to 14%); Technology 11 (9% to 11%); and Technology 12 (5% to 11%). The only course where there was a decline in the percentage of female students was in Electronics 12 (3% to 1%).

Figure 3-16

Full-Time Teachers in B.C. Female and Male, 1987-88



Statistics Canada, 1989 (#81-229)

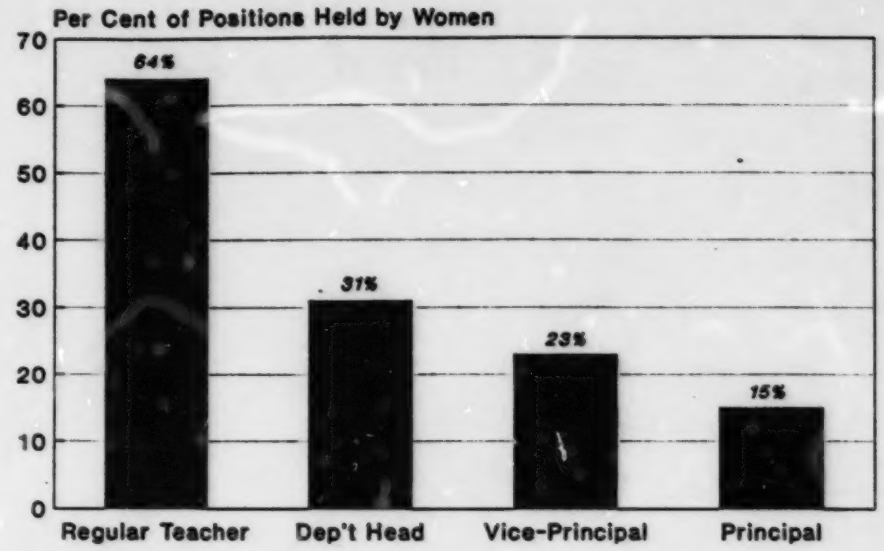
The Imbalance in Teaching Professionals

Significant gender imbalances exist in the distribution of male and female teachers at the elementary-secondary, community college and university levels in British Columbia.

As illustrated in Figure 3-16, in the 1987/88 school year there were more female than male teachers at the elementary-secondary level in the province (14,059 females versus 13,016 males). At the community college level, however, the ratio of male to female teachers was greater than 2:1 (1,360 males versus 560 females). At the university level, the gender split was even more pronounced as male professors outnumbered female professors by approximately 5:1 (2,522 males versus 543 females).

Figure 3-17

Women in B.C. Public School Positions, 1988-1989



B.C. Ministry of Education, 1990

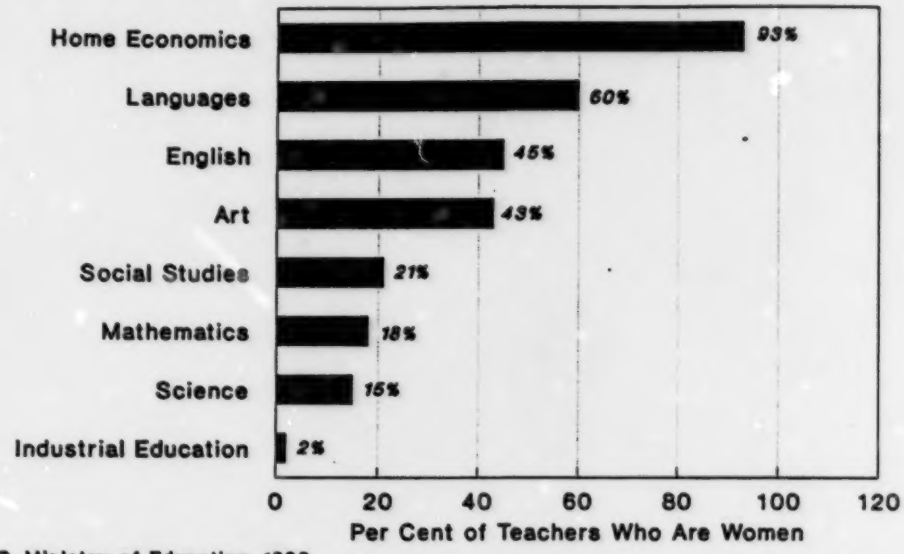
Imbalance in Education Administration Positions

Figure 3-17 highlights the gender imbalance in senior administration positions in B.C. puiblic schools (elementary and secondary) in the 1988/89 school year.

Females comprised 64% of all regular teachers in the province. At senior administrative levels, however, female representation was significantly lower. Females comprised only 15% of all principals; 23% of all vice-principals; and only 31% of all department heads.

Fig. 3-18

Female High School Teachers in B.C. by Subject, 1988-1989



B.C. Ministry of Education, 1990

Teachers and Traditional Subject Areas

Gender imbalances among teachers are very apparent in high school subject areas in the province. The lack of presence of female teachers in non-traditional subject areas has implications for the movement of young women into these areas of study.

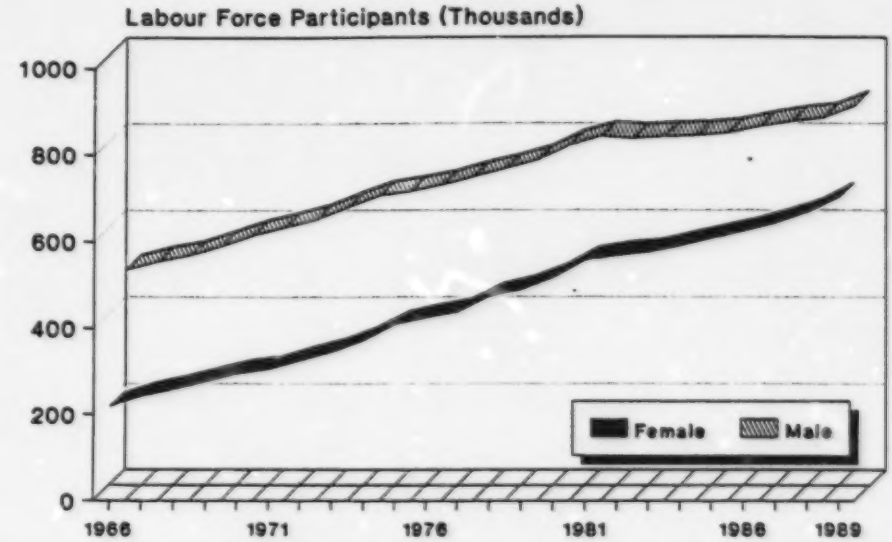
As illustrated in Figure 3-18, female secondary school teachers are best represented in subject areas that are "traditionally female". In Home Economics, 93% of high school teachers are women; in Languages, 60% of teachers are women; and in English and Art the percentages of female teachers are 45% and 43% respectively.

In "traditionally male" subject areas the presence of female teachers remains very low. In industrial education only 2% of teachers are female; in Sciences only 15% of teachers are female; and in Mathematics only 18% of teachers are female. As well, in Social Studies only 21% of teachers are female, although Social Studies is not considered a traditionally male field of study.

IV. Women in the Labour Force

Figure 4-1

B.C. Labour Force (Age 15+) Female and Male, 1966-1989



Statistics Canada, 1990 (#71-001)

The Growing Female Labour Force

The female labour force in British Columbia grew dramatically since the 1960s. As illustrated in Figure 4-1, there were 218,000 women in the provincial labour force in 1966; by 1989 there were 701,000 women. By comparison, the male labour force grew from 498,000 in 1966 to 877,000 in 1989. Over the 24 year period, the female labour force in the province grew 3.2 times, while the male labour force grew 1.7 times.

Figure 4-2

Women Age 15+ as a Per Cent of the B.C. Labour Force, Selected Years

Statistics Canada, 1990 (#71-001)

Changing Labour Force Composition

As a result of the increased numbers of females entering the British Columbia labour force, women today represent a significantly larger share of the labour market than they did 40 years ago.

As seen in Figure 4-2, 21.9% of the labour force was female in 1950. Female representation grew consistently over the next four decades, and in 1989 females comprised 44.4% of the B.C. labour force.

Figure 4-3

Labour Force Participation in B.C. Female and Male (Age 15+), 1966-1989

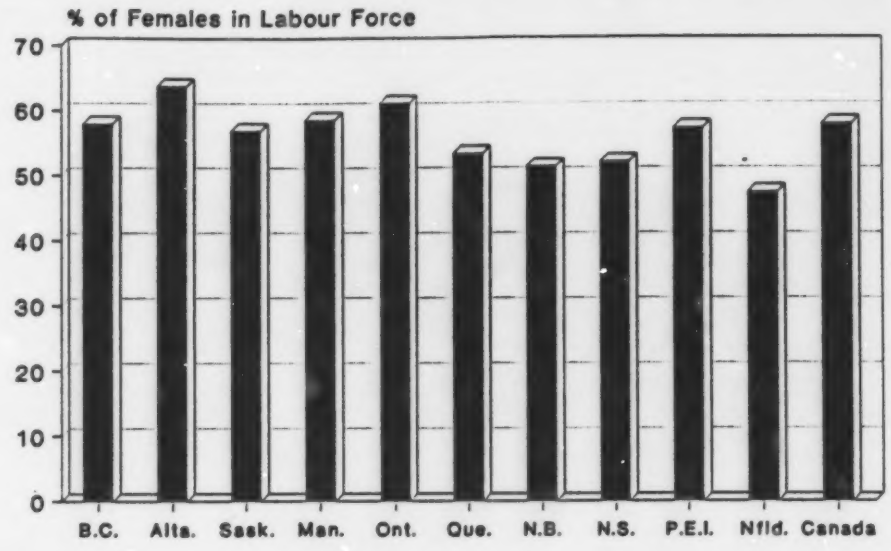
Statistics Canada, 1990 (#71-001)

A Narrowing of Labour Force Participation Rates

Figure 4-3 shows a gradual narrowing of labour force participation rates between men and women in British Columbia. In 1966, 79.1% of men in British Columbia were in the labour force, compared to only 34.5% of women. By 1989, male participation had declined to 75.9%, while the female participation rate increased to 58%.

Figure 4-4

Female Labour Force Participation in Canada and Provinces (Age 15+), 1989



Statistics Canada, 1990 (#71-001)

Average Female Labour Force Participation in B.C.

Women in British Columbia in 1989 had a labour force participation rate comparable to that of the Canadian female average.

As shown in Figure 4-4, 58% of B.C. females were in the labour force in 1989. This rate was the third highest of all provinces, falling behind female participation in Alberta (63.8%) and Ontario (61.2%). The Canadian female average in 1989 was 57.9%. The higher participation rates in Alberta and Ontario are not unique to women; the participation rates of men in those provinces are also higher than the rates for British Columbia males.

Figure 4-5

Labour Force Participation in B.C. by Gender and Age, Selected Years

1961 Census; StatsCan, 1989 (#71-529)

Female-Male Participation Differences Reduced Across Age Groups

The differences in labour force participation between women and men declined dramatically across age groups between 1961, 1981 and 1988. Differences in female-male labour force participation today are least noticeable within the younger generation.

As seen in Figure 4-5, the participation rate of B.C. women aged 15-24 years in 1961 was 18%, compared to 60.3% for males. In 1981, female participation in this group soared to 67.1%, compared to 76.5% for males. By 1988 the gap had narrowed to only a 4 point difference, as 69.2% of women and 73.2% of men in this age group participated the labour force.

In the 25-44 year old age group, 32.7% of women were in the labour force in 1961, compared to 93.7% of men. In 1981, female participation had climbed to 65.4%, while male participation increased slightly to 96%. By 1988, the participation rate of females in this age group rose to 75.4%, while the male rate dropped slightly to 95.1%.

In the 45-64 year old age category, 31.9% of women and 85.1% of men participated in the labour force in 1961. In 1981, female participation increased to 46.6% while male participation declined to 83.8%. By 1988, the female rate rose to 51.9% while the male participation rate declined further to 79.6%.

Figure 4-6

Labour Force Participation in B.C. by Gender and Marital Status, Select Yrs

1961 Census; StatsCan, 1989 (#71-529)

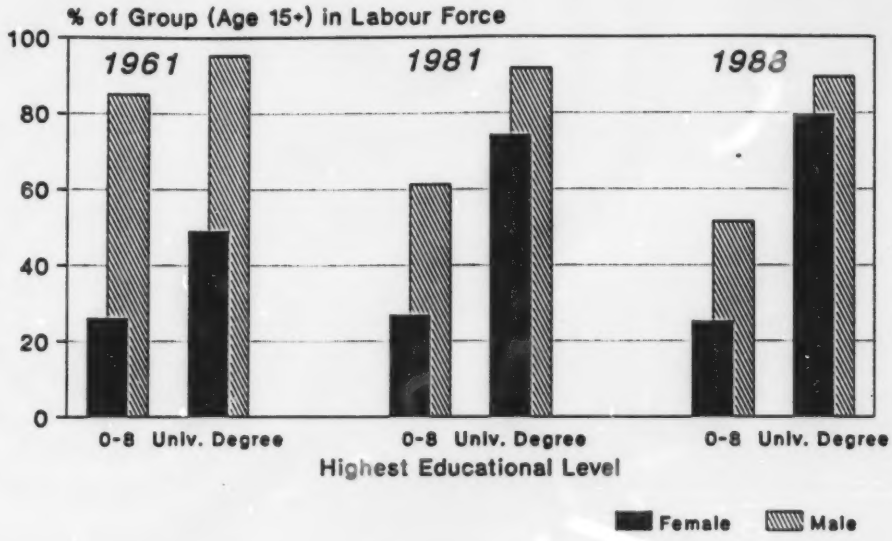
Participation of Married Females Increasing

As illustrated in Figure 4-6, there was only a small difference in labour force participation rates between single men and single women in B.C. in 1961, 1981 and 1988. In 1961, 50.8% of single women were in the labour force, compared to 59.8% of single men. In 1981, the participation rate of single women rose to 70.9%, while the rate for single males rose to 74.8%. In 1988, the participation rates of both single women and single men rose slightly to 71.5% and 75.2% respectively.

Among married women and married men, the difference in labour force participation rates is greater, although the gap narrowed has narrowed greatly since the 1960s. In 1961, the participation rate of married women was only 23.3%, compared to 82.4% for married men. By 1981, 49.7% of married women were in the labour force compared to 81.2% of married males. In 1988, married female participation increased further to 56.8% while married male participation declined to 76.7%.

Figure 4-7

Labour Force Participation in Canada by Education, Selected Years



1961 Census; StatsCan, 1989 (#71-529)

Narrowing of Participation Differences Across Educational Levels

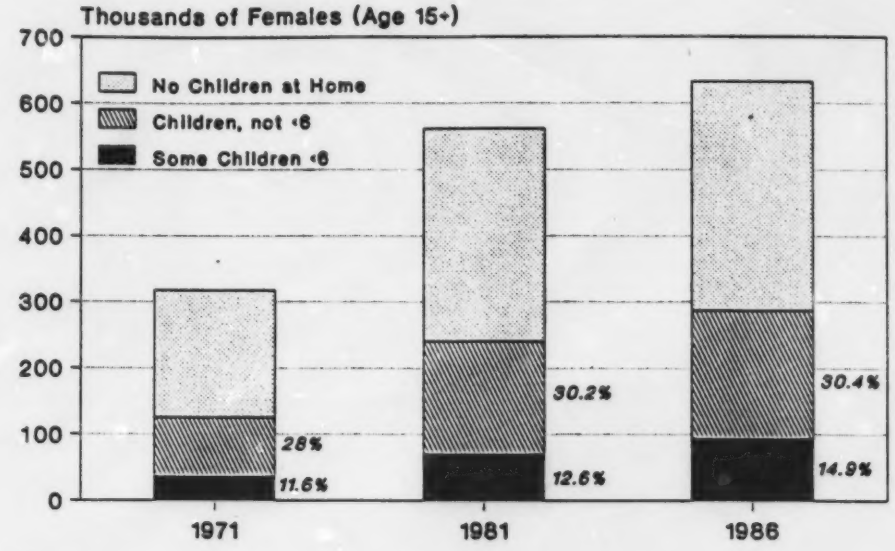
The past three decades have witnessed a narrowing of labour force participation differences between women and men across educational levels. There has also been a marked decline in labour force participation among the least educated women and men in Canada over the time period.

As seen in Figure 4-7, 26% of women with less than grade 9 education were in the Canadian labour force in 1961, compared to 85% of men. In 1981, 26.7% of women in this group were in the labour force, while the male rate dropped to 61.3%. By 1988, only 25.1% of women and 51.5% of men in this group were in the labour market. These lower participation rates reflect the greater need for individuals to obtain an education in order to compete effectively in the current labour market.

At the opposite end of the education spectrum, 48.9% of women with a university degree in 1961 were in the labour force, compared to 95.3% of men. In 1981, labour force participation differences declined substantially as 74.2% of women with a degree were in the labour market compared to 91.7% of men. In 1988, female participation rose further to 79.5% while male participation dropped slightly to 89.4%.

Figure 4-8

Females in the B.C. Labour Force with Children at Home, Selected Years



Census Data

Mothers in the Labour Force

Figure 4-8 shows the growth in the number of women in the British Columbia labour force with children at home.

In 1971, there were approximately 37,000 females with children under 6 years of age (11.6% of all working women), and another 89,000 females with children older than 6 years (30.2% of working women) who were in the B.C. labour force.

By 1986, there were 94,000 women in the labour force with children under 6 years (14.9% of working women) and a further 192,000 women in the labour market with older children at home (30.4% of the labour force).

Figure 4-9

Labour Force Participation of B.C. Women with Children Home, Selected Yrs.

Census Data

Increasing Participation of Women with Children

As illustrated in Figure 4-9, labour force participation of women with children at home increased significantly over both the 1970s and 1980s. The participation rate of women with no children at home rose between 1971 and 1981, but remained stable over the 1980s.

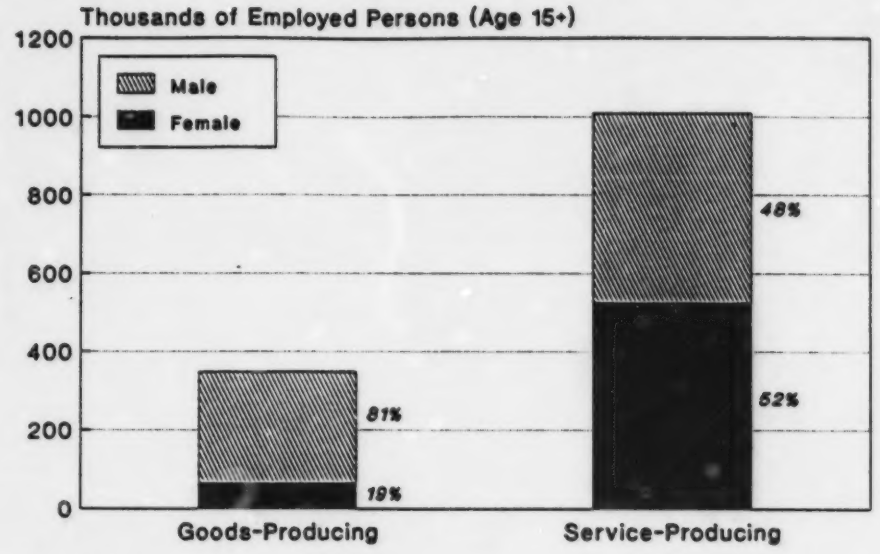
In 1971, 43% of B.C. women with no children at home were in the labour force; by 1981 the rate had risen to 51.4%. Over the 1980s, however, participation rates in this category appear to have slowed as only 51.2% participated in the labour force in 1986.

For women with children at home, the most dramatic growth in labour force participation occurred among women with children under 6 years of age. In 1971, only 25.7% of this group was in the labour force; by 1981 the rate was 44.6%; by 1986 the rate was 56.2%.

For women with children over 5 years of age, 45.2% were in the labour force in 1971; by 1981 the rate was 60%; in 1986 the rate was 64.9%. The average rates for women with children of any age at home were 37% in 1971; 54.5% in 1981; and 61.7% in 1986.

Figure 4-10

Female and Male Employment in B.C. Goods and Services Sectors, 1988



Statistics Canada, 1989 (#71-529)

Women and the Service Sector

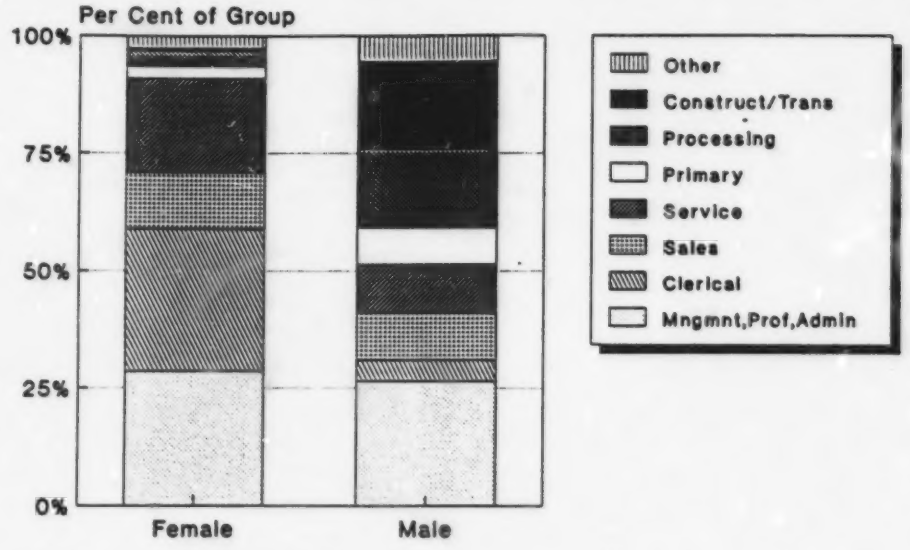
Women in British Columbia are predominantly employed in the service-producing sector of the economy.

In 1988 there were 526,000 B.C. women in service jobs, representing 52% of employment in that sector. Service sector jobs include jobs in transportation, communications, retail trade, finance, business services, education, health and social services, accommodation and restaurants, and public administration.

In the goods-producing sector there were only 66,000 employed women, representing a mere 19% of employment in that industry. Goods-producing jobs include jobs in agriculture, other primary industries, manufacturing, construction and some utilities.

Figure 4-11

Occupations of the B.C. Labour Force, Female and Male (Age 15+), 1988



Statistics Canada, 1989 (#71-529)

The Different Occupational Mix

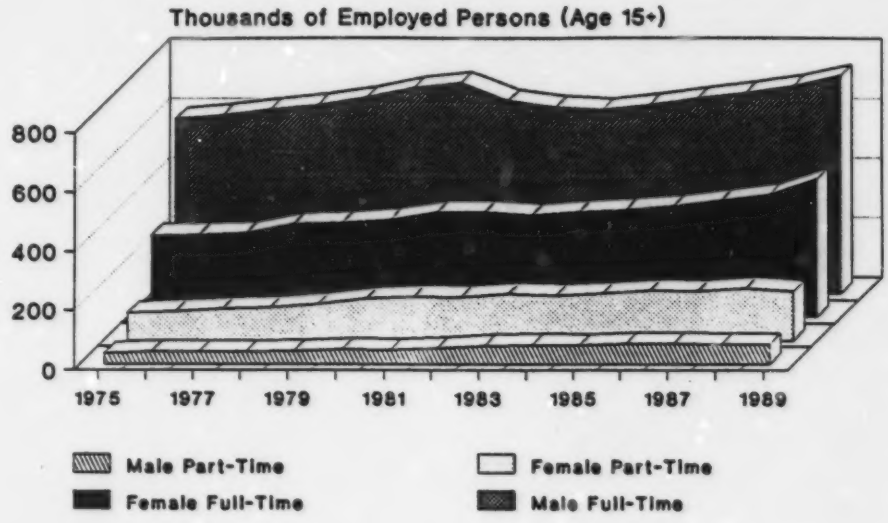
Figure 4-11 illustrates the different occupational mix of the female and male populations in British Columbia in 1988. Women are more concentrated in clerical, service and sales jobs, while men are more concentrated in processing, construction and primary industry occupations.

Among females in the province, the largest occupational group is clerical (comprising 30% of female workers), followed by management, professional and administration (29%), service (20%), sales (12%), processing (3%), primary (3%), construction and transportation (1%), and other (3%).

Among males, the largest occupational group is management, professional and administration (26%), followed by construction and transportation (19%), processing (17%), service (10%), sales (10%), primary (8%), clerical (5%), and other (5%).

Fig. 4-12

Full-Time and Part-Time Employment in B.C. by Gender, 1975-1989



Statistics Canada, 1990 (#71-001)

Women Lead Employment Growth

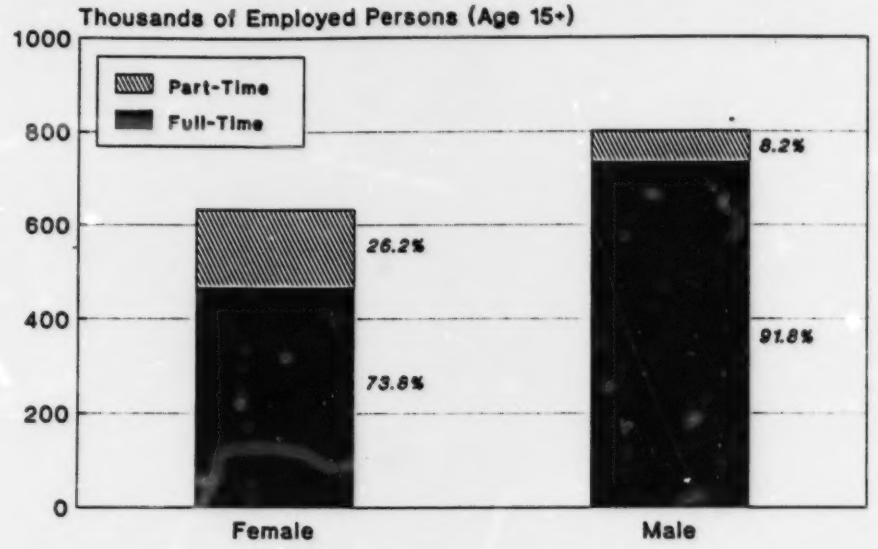
Figure 4-12 illustrates full-time and part-time employment growth in British Columbia in the past 15 years.

In 1975, there were 590,000 full-time and 33,000 part-time male workers, and 277,000 full-time and 92,000 part-time female workers. In 1989, full-time male employment rose to 735,000; part-time male employment increased to 66,000; female full-time employment climbed to 467,000; and part-time female employment increased to 166,000 workers.

Over the 15 year period, women added approximately 190,000 new full-time workers and 74,000 new part-time workers to the provincial labour force. Men added fewer full-time workers (145,000) and fewer part-time workers (30,000).

Figure 4-13

Full-Time and Part-Time Employment in B.C. by Gender, 1989



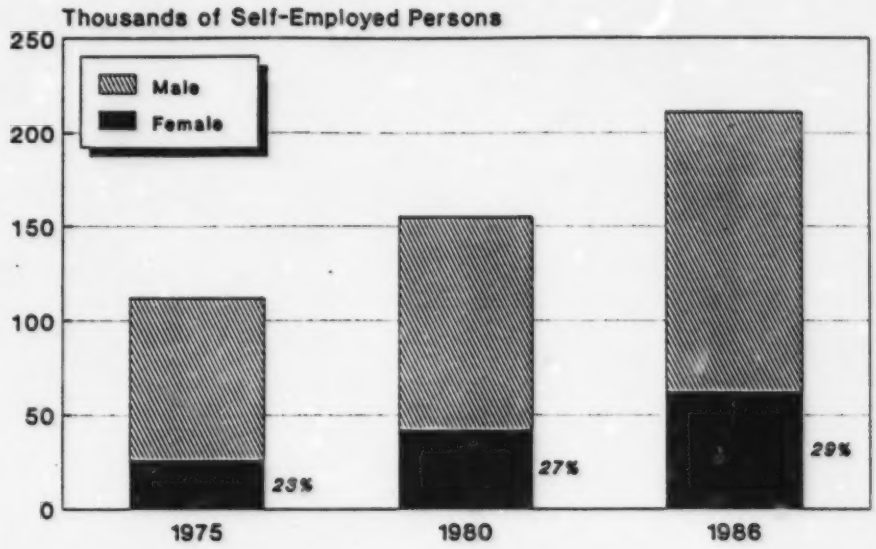
Statistics Canada, 1990 (#71-001)

The Significance of Part-Time Employment

As illustrated in Figure 4-13, part-time jobs represent a large portion of female employment in British Columbia. In 1989, 26.2% of female workers had part-time positions, compared to only 8.2% of male workers.

Figure 4-14

Self-Employment in B.C. by Gender (Age 15+), Selected Years



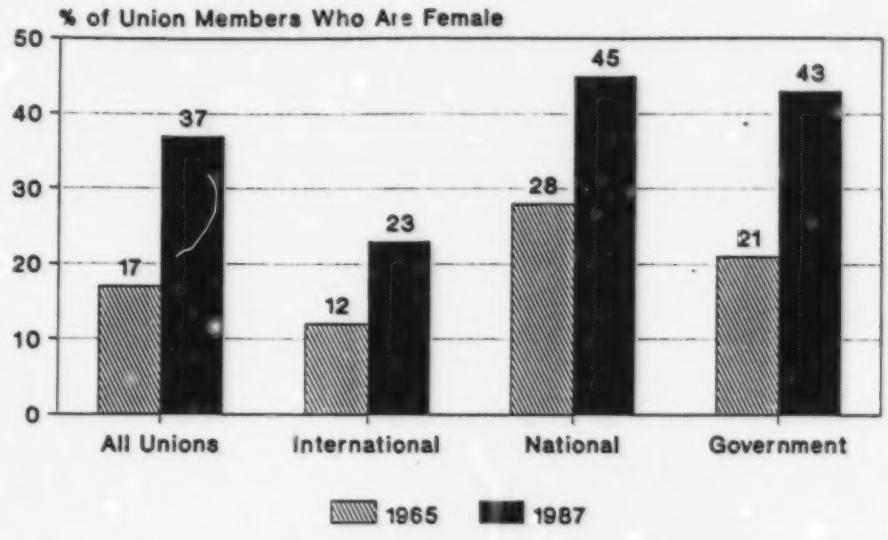
Statistics Canada, 1987 (#71-536)

Female Entrepreneurs

As seen in Figure 4-14, female self-employment in British Columbia increased substantially since the mid-1970s. In 1975, there were 26,000 self-employed women, representing 23% of all self-employed persons in the province. By 1986, there were 62,000 self-employed women, representing 29% of all self-employed individuals.

Figure 4-15

Female Union Membership in Canada, 1965 and 1987



Statistics Canada, 1989 (#71-202)

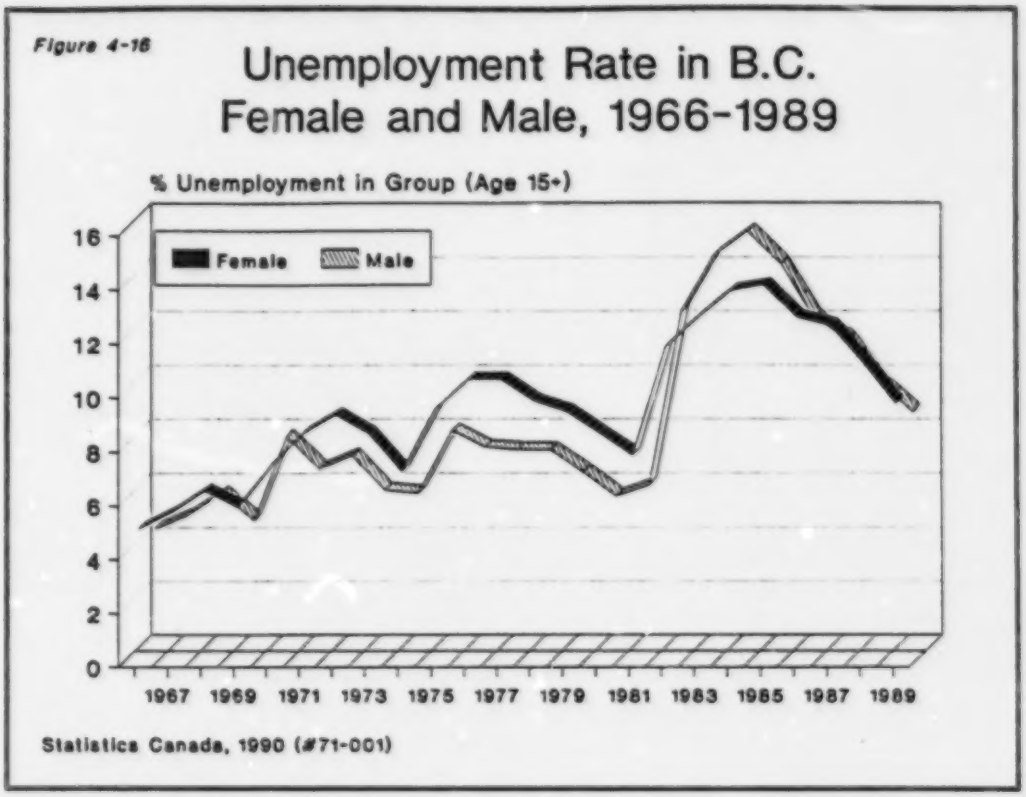
The Growth of Female Union Membership

Figure 4-15 shows the increase in female union membership in Canada between 1965 and 1987.

In 1965, women accounted for only 17% of organized labour in Canada (292,000 members); by 1987 they accounted for 37% or 1.36 million members. This represents a membership increase of 367%. Over the same time period, male membership increased by 57% to 2.31 million members.

Female membership tends to be concentrated in national and government unions. In national unions, female membership grew from 28% to 45% between 1965 and 1987. Among government unions, female membership rose from 21% to 43%. Female membership in international unions grew at a slower rate- from 12% to 23%.

Figure 4-16



Higher Female Unemployment Rates

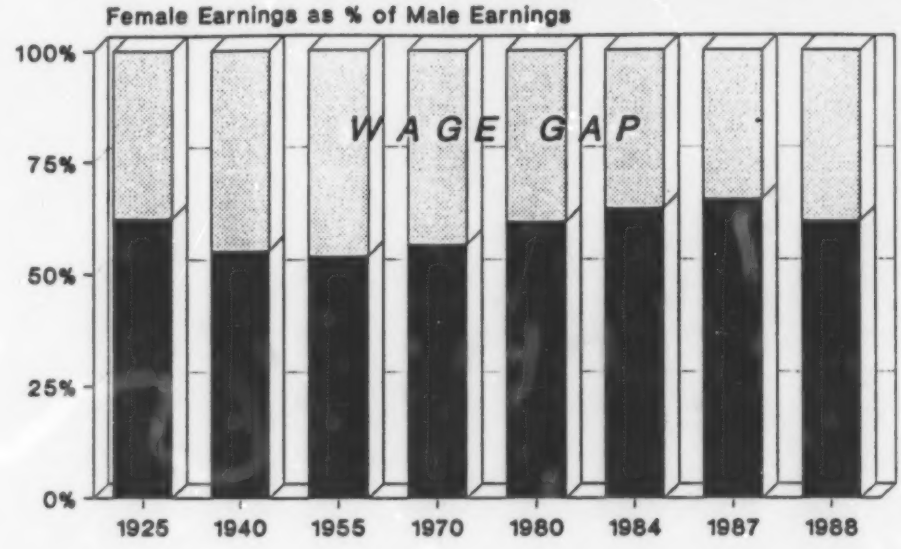
Women in British Columbia generally have higher unemployment rates than men. Only in periods of economic downturn are male rates greater.

As illustrated in Figure 4-16, female unemployment rates were higher throughout most of the 1970s. During the recession of the 1980s, however, the male unemployment rate was higher than the female rate because of the high unemployment levels in male-dominated resource-based industries in the province. By 1986, the female unemployment rate was again higher than the male rate; in 1989, the unemployment rate among women was 9.6% versus the male rate of 8.7%.

V. Women, Earnings and Income

Figure 5-1

Female-Male Earnings Ratios for Full-Time Earners in B.C., Selected Yrs.



Statistics Canada, 1990 (#13-217)

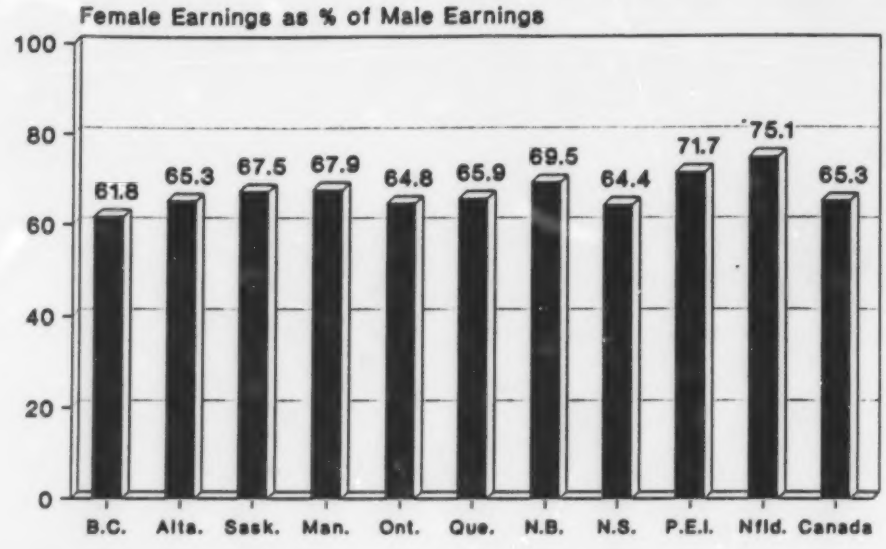
The Persistence of the Wage Gap

The gap in full-time, full-year earnings between men and women in British Columbia has undergone little change since the 1920s.

As illustrated in Figure 5-1, in 1925 female full-time earnings were equivalent to just 62.5% of male earnings. The earnings ratios in the following years were as follows: 1940 (55.3%); 1955 (54%); 1970 (56.6%); 1980 (61.7%); 1984 (64.7%); 1987 (66.7%); 1988 (61.8%). Low female-male earnings ratios have been a persistent and continuous phenomenon in British Columbia throughout this century.

Figure 5-2

Female-Male Earnings Ratios for Full-Time Earners by Province, 1988



Statistics Canada, 1990 (#13-217)

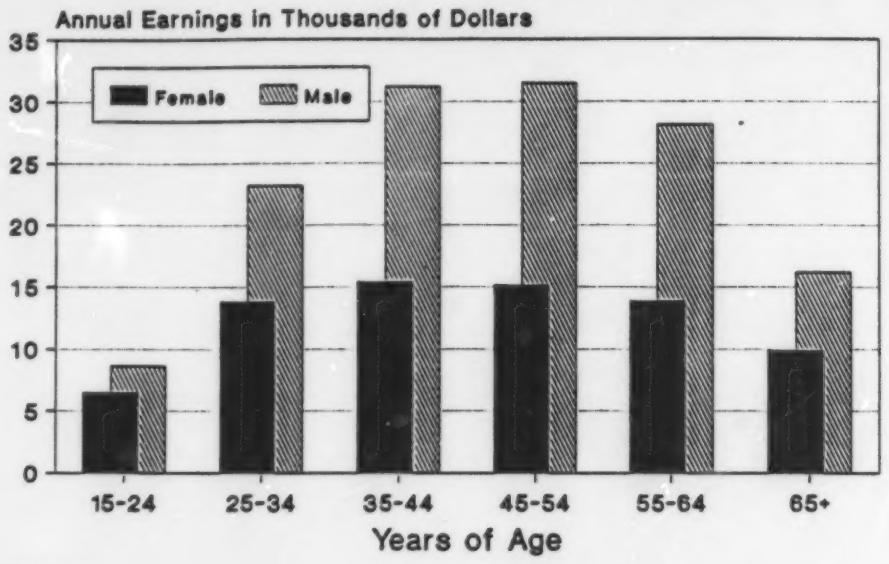
Low Earnings Ratio in British Columbia

In 1988 British Columbia had the lowest female-male full-time earnings ratio of all provinces in Canada.

As seen in Figure 5-2, Newfoundland had the highest earnings ratio as women's earnings were 75.1% of men's earnings. Prince Edward Island was second at 71.7%, followed by New Brunswick, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Quebec, Alberta, Ontario, Nova Scotia and British Columbia. In Canada as a whole, the ratio of female to male earnings was 65.3%.

Figure 5-3

Average Earnings of Women and Men in B.C. by Age Group, 1986



1986 Census

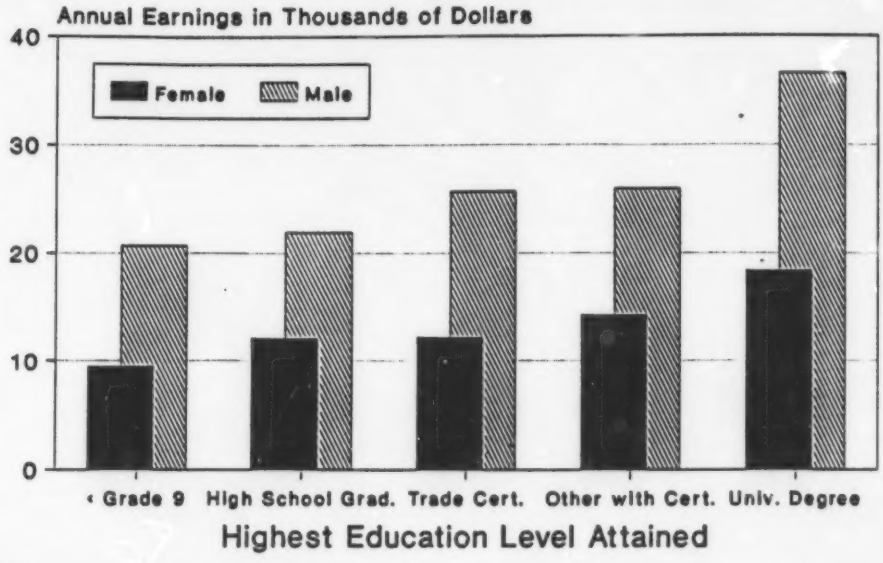
Earnings Disparities across Age Groups

Figure 5-3 shows the average earnings of all male and female wage-earners in British Columbia by age group. Note that the data are not exclusively for full-time, full-year workers, but for all persons who earned some income in 1986.

The narrowest earnings disparity is in the youngest age group (15-24 years of age), where women earned an average of $6,489 in 1986, and men earned $8,615. In other age groups, average earnings were as follows: 25-34 years (women $13,837; men $23,223); 35-44 years (women $15,399; men $31,190); 45-54 years (women $15,122; men $31,467); 55-64 years (women $13,862; men $28,143); 65 years + (women $9,908; men $16,188).

Figure 5-4

Average Earnings of Women and Men in B.C. by Education, 1986



1986 Census

Earnings Disparities across Education Levels

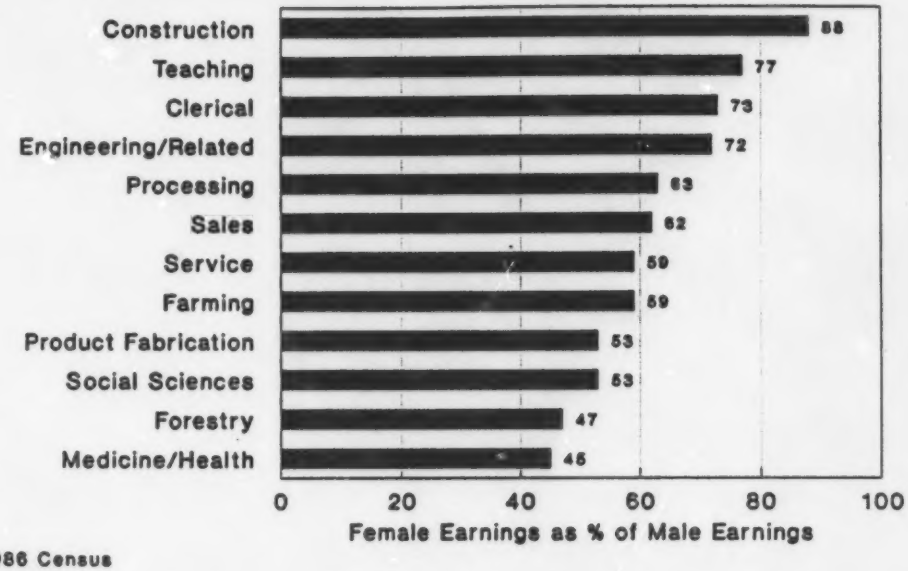
Figure 5-4 shows the average earnings of male and female wage-earners in British Columbia by the highest level of education attained. As in the previous chart, data in this analysis are not exclusively for full-time, full-year workers, but for all persons who earned income in 1986.

The lowest earnings levels for both women and men are in the least educated category (less than grade 9 education), where women earned $9,496 and men earned $20,711. As educational attainment increases, earnings levels rise for both sexes, but disparities in earnings persist.

Among those whose highest level is a high school certificate, female earnings were $12,079 and male earnings were $21,910. For those whose highest level was a trade certificate, average female earnings were $12,225, compared to male earnings of $25,672. Among those whose highest level is another post-secondary certificate or diploma, female earnings were $14,252, while male earnings were $25,973. For those with a university degree, female earnings were $18,388 versus male earnings of $36,850.

Figure 5-5

Female-Male Earnings Ratios for Selected Occupations in B.C., 1986



1986 Census

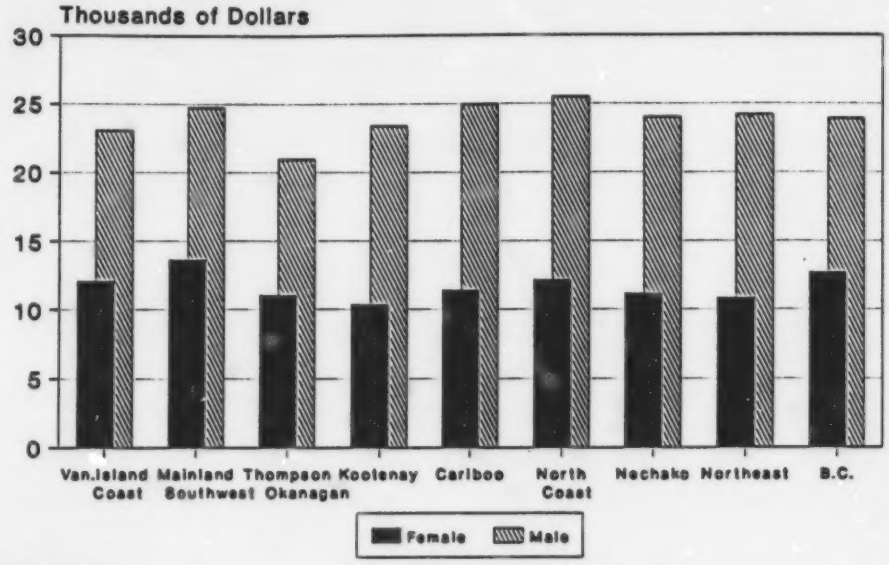
Occupational Earnings Disparities

Figure 5-5 shows female-male earnings ratios for full-time, full-year workers in general occupational categories in the province.

Construction occupations had the smallest earnings disparity between women and men, as female earnings were approximately 88% of male earnings. The greatest earnings disparities were in health occupations and forestry occupations, where the female-male earnings ratios were 45% and 47% respectively.

Figure 5-6

Average Total Income of Women and Men in B.C. Regions, 1986



1986 Census

Income Gaps across Development Regions

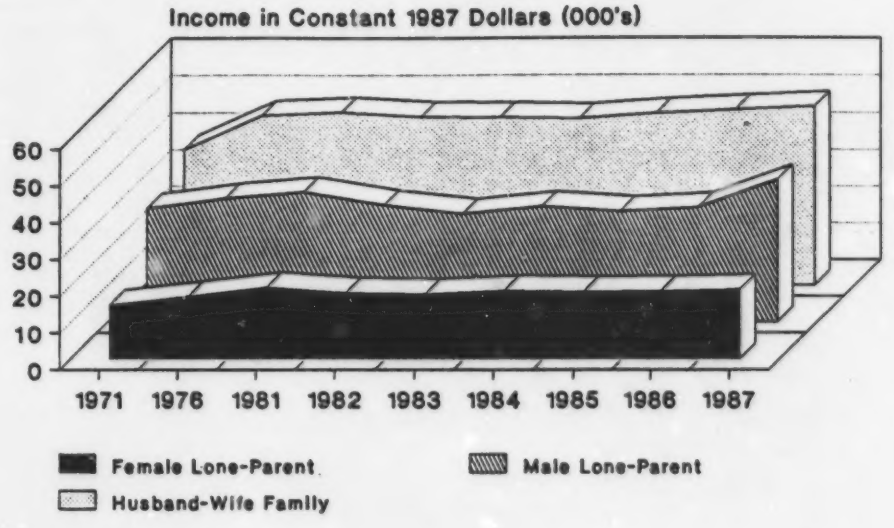
Significant income disparities between women and men are evident in all development regions in British Columbia.

As seen in Figure 5-6, the average total income (income from all sources) of women aged 15 years and over in the province is roughly half that of men. Average total income levels in the eight development regions and B.C. in 1986 are as follows:

		Women	Men
Region 1	Vancouver Island-Coast	$12,065	$23,048
Region 2	Mainland-Southwest	$13,645	$24,716
Region 3	Thompson-Okanagan	$11,018	$20,963
Region 4	Kootenay	$10,368	$23,382
Region 5	Cariboo	$11,4[illegible]	$24,951
Region 6	North Coast	$12[illegible]	$25,481
Region 7	Nechako	$11,165	$24,003
Region 8	Northeast	$10,813	$24,184
	B.C.	$12,716	$23,908

Figure 5-7

Family Income in Canada
Selected Years



Statistics Canada, 1990 (#13-207)

The Low Income of Female Lone-Parent Families

Figure 5-7 shows the average income levels for three types of families in British Columbia since the early 1970s.

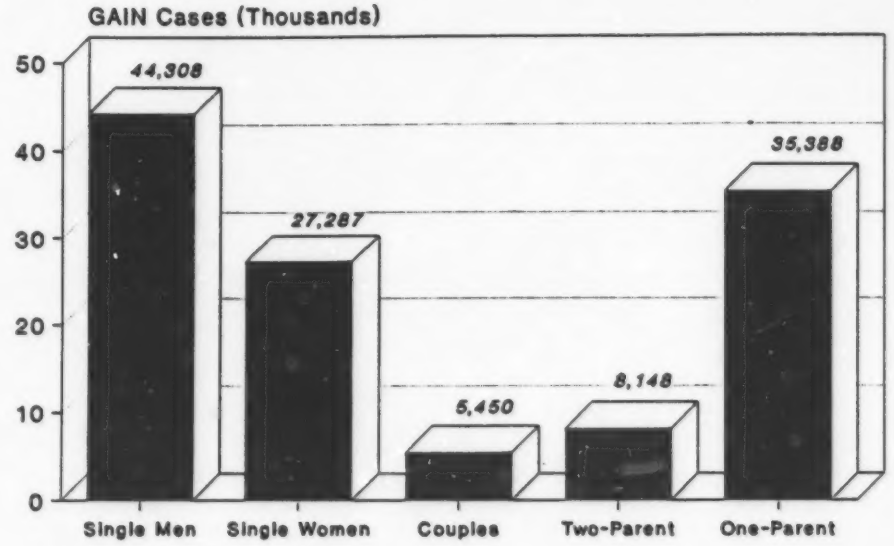
Husband-wife families have consistently had the highest level of income over the time period. In 1971, husband-wife families had an average annual income of $36,974 in constant 1987 dollars. By 1987, their average income had risen to $48,708 annually.

Male lone-parent families had the second highest level of income. In 1971, these families had an average income of $30,905 in constant 1987 dollars. In 1987, their average annual income rose to $38,891.

Female lone-parent families have had a significantly lower level of income than either of the other family types. In 1971, female lone-parent families had an average income of only $14,681 (constant 1987 dollars). By 1987, their average income increased only modestly to $18,945- less than half the level of male lone-parents.

Figure 5-8

Income Assistance by Family Type in B.C., September, 1989



B.C. Ministry of Social Services, 1989

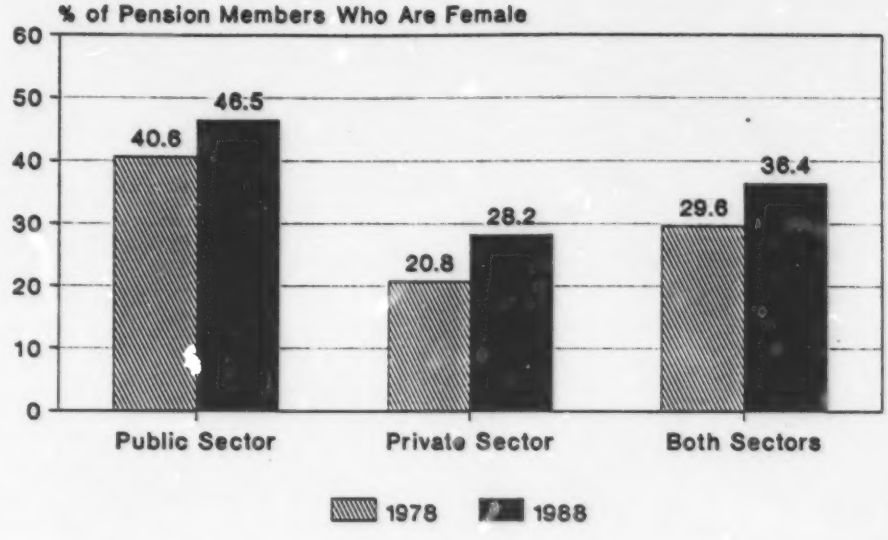
Income Assistance among Singles and One-Parent Families

Figure 5-8 shows the distribution of GAIN cases (Guaranteed Available Income for Need) in British Columbia in 1989.

Single men constitute the single largest group of GAIN cases (44,308), followed by one-parent families, single women, two-parent families and couples. It is important to note that 82% of one-parent families in the province are headed by women, meaning that more women than men are likely receiving income assistance in the province. Although not evident in this chart, it is also noteworthy that approximately one out of every three lone-parent families in British Columbia received income assistance in 1989.

Figure 5-9

Female Pension Membership in Canada, 1978 and 1988



Statistics Canada, 1989 (#74-401)

Low Female Pension Plan Membership in the Private Sector

Between 1978 and 1988, female pension plan membership grew as a percentage of total membership in both the public and private sectors in Canada. However, female participation in private sector plans remains alarmingly low.

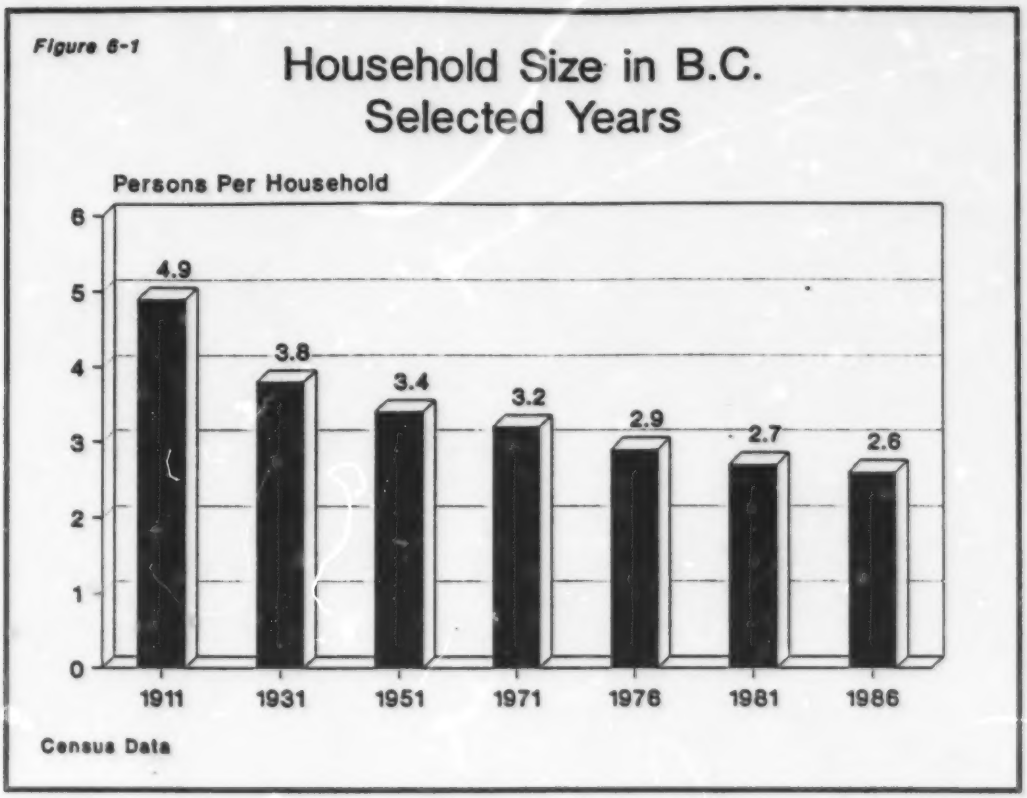
As seen in Figure 5-9, in 1988 some 46.5% of public sector pension plan members were female, up from 40.6% in 1978. This membership rate is consistent with female representation in the Canadian public sector, which stood at 46% in 1988.

In the private sector in 1988, only 28.2% of pension plan members were women, up from 20.8% in 1978. This level of membership is significantly lower than female representation in the private sector, which stood at 44% in 1988.

Among both sectors, female pension plan membership grew from 29.6% of total membership in 1978 to 36.4% in 1988. The low levels of pension plan membership among women in the private sector, coupled with the lower wages of the female labour force, together create significant income inequalities among women and men at the time of retirement.

VI. Women and Housing

Figure 6-1



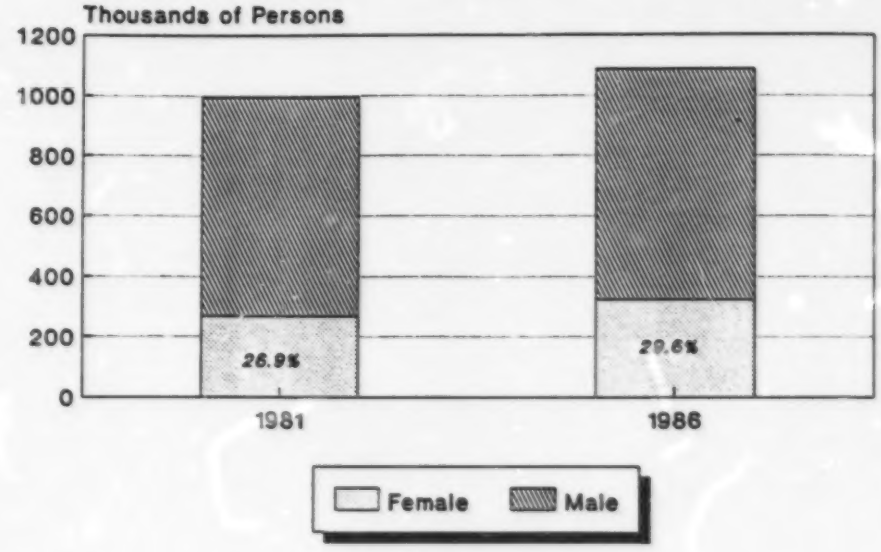
New Living Arrangements in British Columbia

Since the early part of this century there has been a steady decline in the number of persons living in individual households in British Columbia.

As illustrated in Figure 6-1, the average household size in the province in 1911 was nearly 5 persons. By 1986, the average household size was just 2.6 persons. Part of the explanation for smaller households is the decline in fertility rates over time. However, it is also true that more British Columbians today choose to live alone or at least apart from a larger family dwelling. This behavioral shift is one of the reasons for today's high demand for housing in the province.

Figure 6-2

Household Maintainers in B.C. Female and Male, 1981 and 1986



Census Data

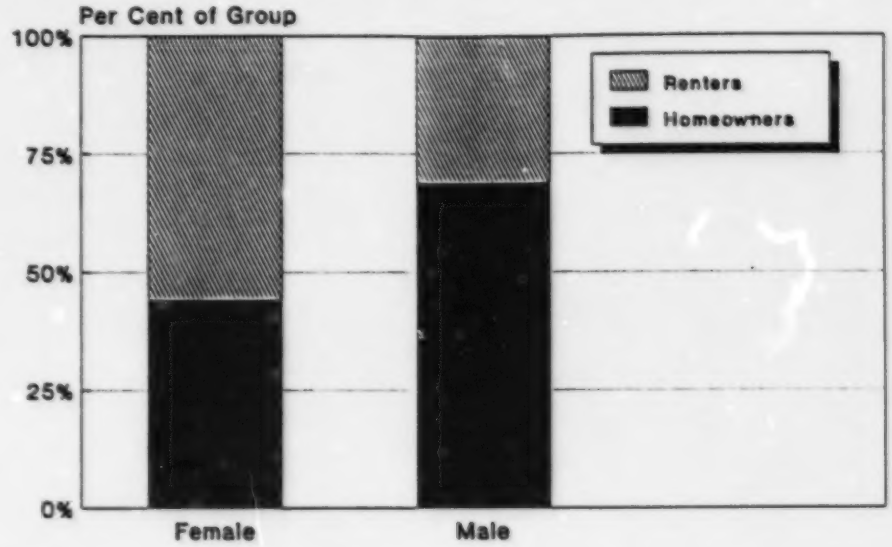
More Women as Heads of Households

Figure 6-2 shows the numbers of female and male household maintainers in British Columbia in 1981 and 1986. A household maintainer refers to the individual responsible for paying the rent, mortgage, taxes or electricity of a dwelling.

In 1981 there were 268,000 women who were household maintainers in B.C., representing 26.9% of all household maintainers in the province. By 1986, the number of female household maintainers increased to 322,000, accounting for some 29.6%.

Figure 6-3

Housing Tenure in B.C. Female and Male, 1988



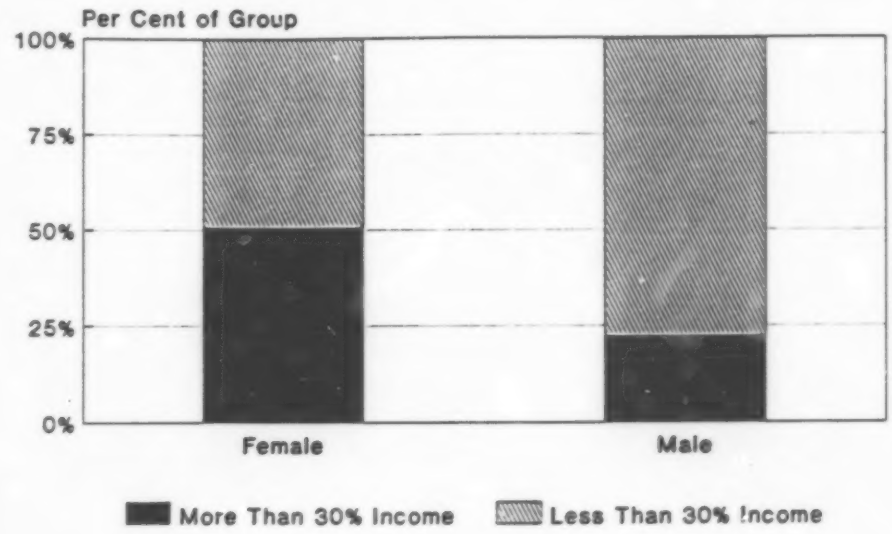
CMHC, 1988

More Female Renters

Figure 6-3 shows the percentages of female and male renters and homeowners in British Columbia in 1988. Among renters in the province there are more women than men, as 55.8% are female and 44.2% are male. Among homeowners in the province the situation is reversed, as 68.9% are male and only 31.2% are female.

Figure 6-4

Rent-to-Income Ratios in B.C. Female and Male, 1988



CMHC, 1988

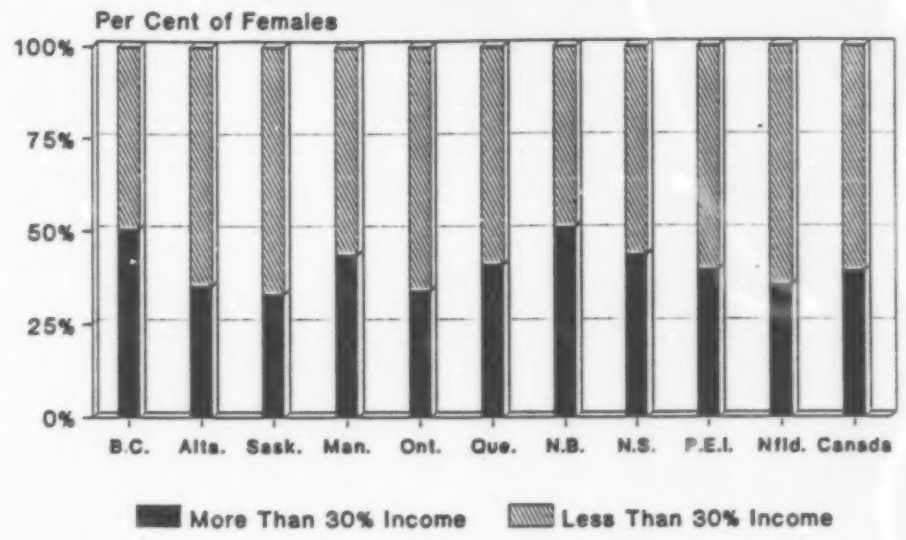
The High Cost of Rent for Women

Women in British Columbia spend a significantly larger share of their income on rent than their male counterparts.

As illustrated in Figure 6-4, 50.6% of female renters in B.C. spent more than 30% of their income on rent in 1988. Among male renters, only 22.4% spent over 30% of their income on rent.

Figure 6-5

Female Rent-to-Income Ratios by Province, 1988



CMHC, 1988

The Rental Burden in British Columbia

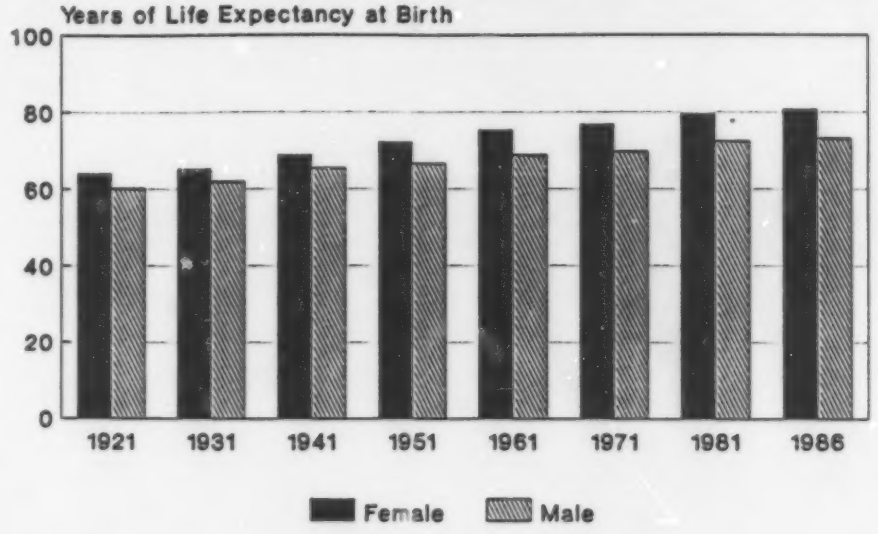
Figure 6-5 shows the percentage of female renters spending more than 30% of their income on rent in all provinces in 1988.

New Brunswick had the highest percentage of female renters in this category (51.2%), followed closely by British Columbia (50.6%). Percentages in other provinces were significantly lower: Manitoba (43.7%); Nova Scotia (43.7%); Quebec (41%); Prince Edward Island (39.6%); Newfoundland (35.6%); Alberta (35.3%); Ontario (34%); Saskatchewan (33.1%). In Canada as a whole, 39.3% of female renters spent over 30% of their income on rent in 1988.

VII. The Health of Women

Figure 7-1

Life Expectancy of Females and Males in B.C., Selected Years



Statistics Canada, 1988 (#89-508)

Increases in Life Expectancy

In the past seventy years significant gains have been made in the life expectancies of both women and men in British Columbia.

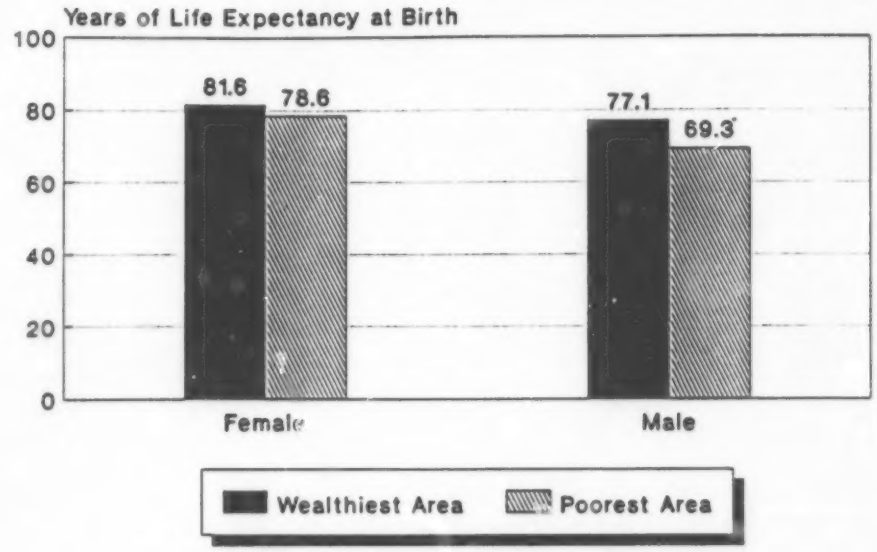
As illustrated in Figure 7-1, the life expectancy of a woman born in the province in 1921 was 64 years; today the life expectancy of a baby girl born in B.C. is almost 81 years.

The life expectancy of a man born in the province has also increased over the time period. In 1921, male life expectancy was 60 years; by 1986, it was 73 years.

An interesting observation is that the gap between female and male life expectancy has widened over this century. Whereas women were likely to live four years longer than men in 1921; women born today are expected to have a lifespan of almost eight years longer than men.

Figure 7-2

Canadian Born Life Expectancy in Urban B.C., by Income and Gender, 1986



StatsCan Health Status Section, 1989

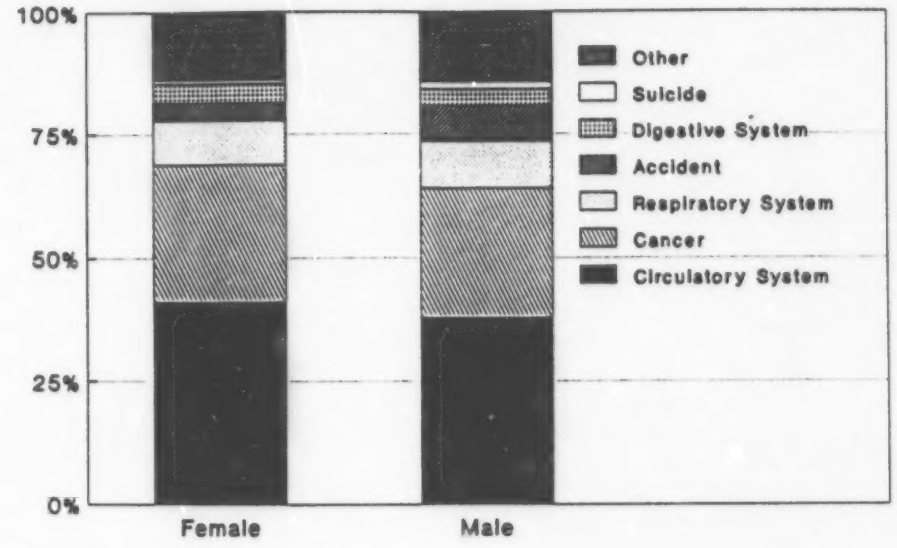
Income and Life Expectancy

As illustrated in Figure 7-2, the income of individuals has a significant impact on the years they can be expected to live.

In a recent analysis of wealthy and poor neighborhoods in urban British Columbia, researchers found that women from wealthier areas can be expected to live three years longer than women from the poorest areas. Among men, the variation is even greater at approximately eight years. It is noteworthy that poverty still appears to be associated with poor health, despite universal access to health care services.

Figure 7-3

Causes of Death in B.C. Female and Male, 1988



B.C. Vital Statistics, 1989

The Major Causes of Death- Heart Disease and Cancer

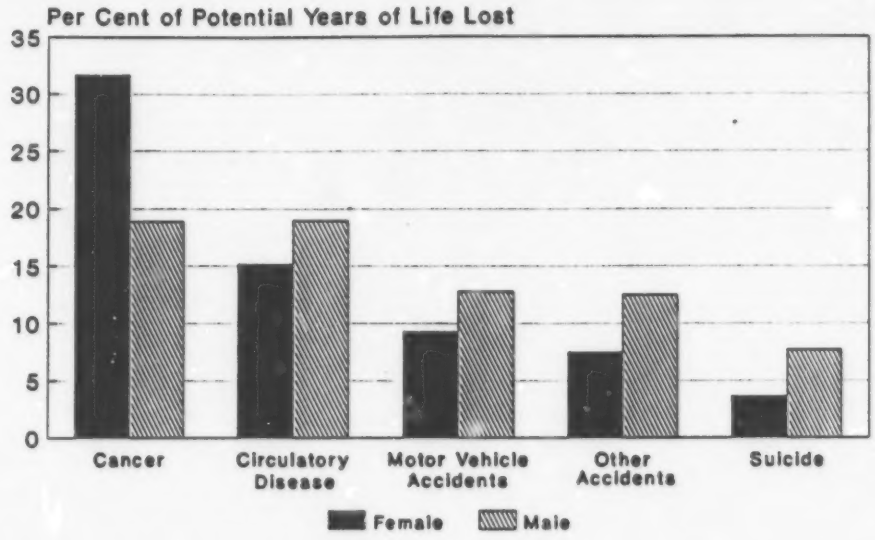
Figure 7-3 shows the causes of death among women and men in British Columbia in 1988.

Heart disease and cancer are the two leading causes of death among women. In 1988, approximately 40% of deaths to women were due to failure of the circulatory system (largely heart disease), and another one quarter of deaths were due to cancer. Heart disease and cancer accounted for roughly the same proportions of deaths among men.

Men in British Columbia were more likely than women to die of suicide (1.5% versus 0.7%) and accidents and violence (7.3% versus 3.6%).

Figure 7-4

Leading Causes of Potential Years of Life Lost in B.C. by Gender, 1987



B.C. Ministry of Health, 1989

The Significance of Cancer

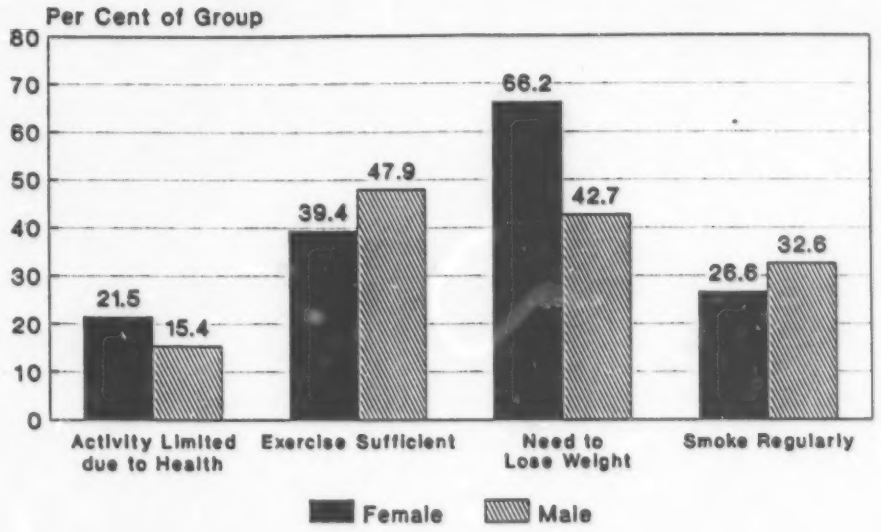
Figure 7-4 shows leading causes of potential years of life lost (PYLL) in British Columbia in 1987. PYLL refers to the number of years of life an individual loses because of an "early death" (i.e. any death before an average lifespan of 75 years). As such, PYLL gives an indication of which causes of death take the greatest toll on human life.

Among women in British Columbia, cancer was responsible for 32% of potential years of life lost in 1987, more than double the impact of circulatory disease (15.2%). Motor vehicle accidents were responsible for 9.3% of life lost, followed by other accidents (7.5%) and suicide (3.6%).

Among men, cancer and circulatory disease were each responsible for about 19% of potential years of life lost. Motor vehicle accidents accounted for 12.8%, followed by other accidents (12.5%) and suicide (7.7%).

Figure 7-5

Selected Measures of Health Females and Males in B.C., 1986



Health and Welfare Canada, 1986

Four Measures of Health

Figure 7-5 shows results of a 1986 health survey in British Columbia. Data are derived from respondents' answers, and are not based on objective study of the women and men surveyed.

In the first category, 21.5% of women indicated their activity and mobility was limited to them because of poor health; for men the figure was 15.4%.

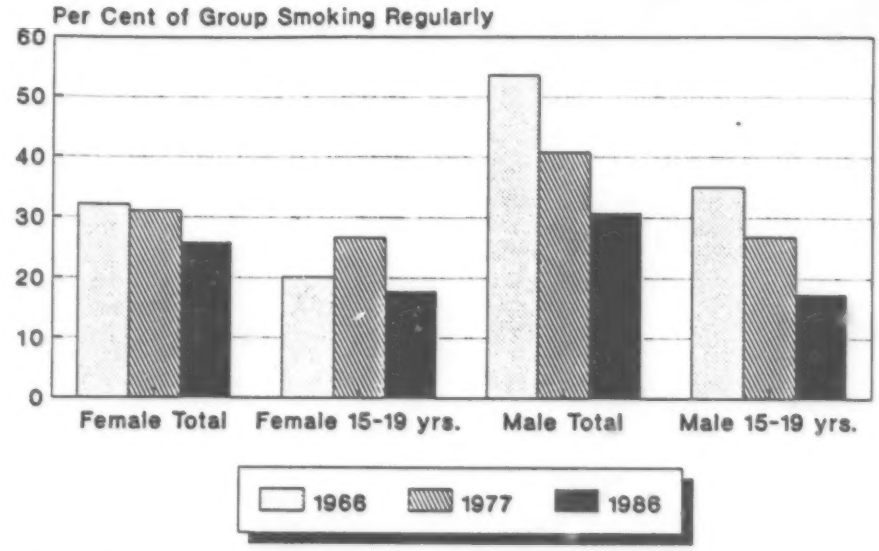
In the second category, only 39.4% of women said their present level of exercise was sufficient. This was lower than the male rate of 47.9%.

In the third category, some 66.2% of women stated they needed to lose weight. This response was significantly higher than the same response among men (42.7%).

In the final health category, 26.6% of women indicated they smoked regularly. The male rate was higher at 32.6%.

Figure 7-6

Cigarette Smokers in Canada Female and Male, Selected Years



Health and Welfare Canada, 1986

Fewer Smokers

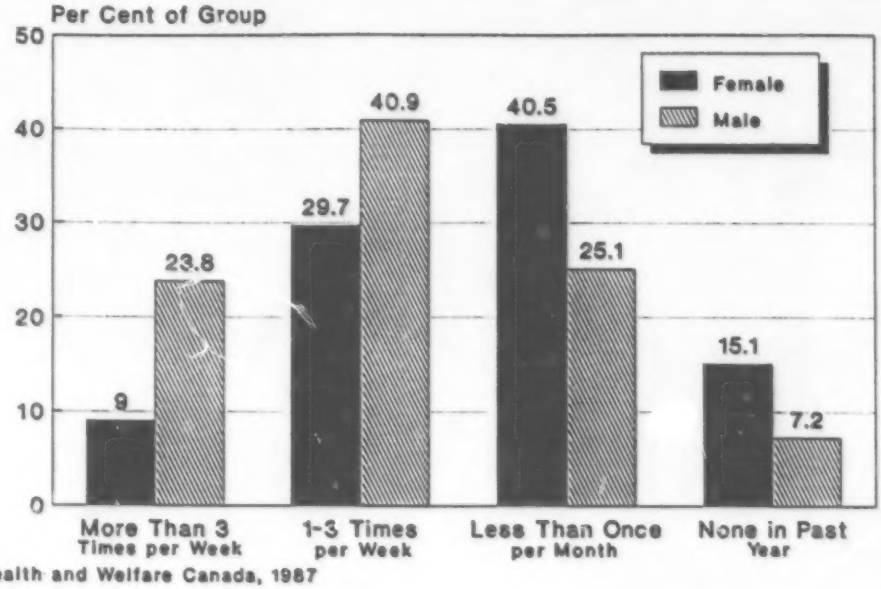
Figure 7-6 shows a decline in smoking rates among women and men in Canada since the mid-1960s.

In 1966, approximately 32% of Canadian women smoked regularly. In 1977 the rate was 31%, and by 1986 the rate dropped to 26%. Canadian men have had higher smoking rates than women, and their consumption has dropped more significantly. In 1966, 54% of men smoked regularly; in 1977 the rate was 41%, and by 1986 the rate dropped to 31%.

Among younger individuals aged 15-19 years, male smoking rates have also dropped more sharply than female rates. In 1966, 20% of women in this age group smoked regularly. In 1977, the female smoking rate actually increased to 27%, but by 1986 the rate had fallen to 18%. Among men, 35% of this group smoked regularly in 1966. In 1977 the male rate fell to 27%, and in 1986 the rate was just 17%. Today a slightly higher percentage of younger women smoke in Canada than younger men.

Figure 7-7

Alcohol Use in B.C. Female and Male, 1987



Health and Welfare Canada, 1987

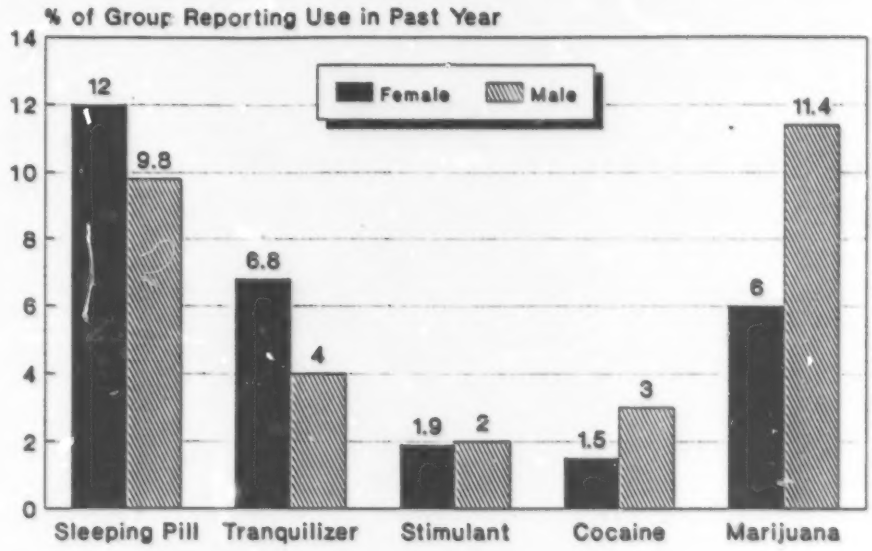
Greater Alcohol Consumption among Men

As illustrated in Figure 7-7, men in British Columbia consume more alcohol than women. Among those who drink alcohol on more than three occasions per week, only 9% of women indicated this level of consumption versus 23.8% of men. For those who drink between one and three times per week, 29.7% of women indicated this consumption level compared to 40.9% of men.

Many more women than men indicated alcohol consumption of less than once a month (40.5% versus 25.1%), and more women than men also indicated no alcohol consumption in the past year (15.1% versus 7.2%).

Figure 7-8

Drug Use in B.C.
Female and Male, 1987



Health and Welfare Canada, 1987

Variations in Drug Use

Figure 7-8 illustrates significant variations in the use of drugs among women and men in British Columbia in 1987. More women than men indicated use of prescription drugs, while more men in the province indicated use of illegal drugs.

A greater percentage of women indicated use of sleeping pills in 1987 (12% of females versus 9.8% of males) and also of tranquilizers (6.8% of females versus 4% of males). More men stated they used marijuana in 1987 (11.4% of males versus 6% of females) as well as cocaine (3% of males versus 1.5% of females).